

MELBOURNE.

A NOVEL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.



BY

THE AUTHOR OF DELORAINE.

Fortune sometimes assumes a rugged brow,
But to endear her smiles, and make the turn
More welcome to us, as 'tis unexpected.—
How sweet is rest after a toilsome day!
How pleasant light after a length of darkness!
How relishing good fortune after ill!

HAYARD.

VOL. I.

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1798.

MELBOURN.

A NOVEL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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BY

THE AUTHOR OF "PETER RABBIT."

Fortune sometimes smiles at a poor fellow,
but seldom for long; and when she does
smile, it is only to show him that she
is not to be trusted. How true this is,
how true it is, that the world is full
of such things, and that the only
way to escape them is to be true to
oneself.

HARVARD

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LONDON.

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1872.



MELBOURNE.

CHAP. I.

INTRODUCTORY.

MY good reader, whoever thou art, let me premise thee before thou enterest on the following pages, that thou art going with me a long and various journey, through a great many different roads, some rough, some smooth, some wet, some dry; and that our accommodation during this period, will be as various as the country we shall pass through.

Sometimes we may chance to be cordially received at elegant mansions, with all the splendour of a court, and all the urbanity of fashion; at others, we may be forced to pass the night in a dirty hovel, among rustics or beggars, surrounded by idle or low, vulgar or wicked company, and not unfrequently, perhaps, with still worse accommodations (or, like me, perchance thou mayest stile it better) than those hovels could afford, in the open air, on the bare ground. Yet so unknown (even to me) is yet the intricate path we are going to pursue together, that I will not venture positively to assert that any one of the afore-mentioned circumstances will actually happen to us. I have only stated these possible contingencies, in order to forewarn thee, that if thy temper be not fitted to encounter the occasional vicissitudes of wet and dry, hot and cold, thou set not thy foot on the step of my vehicle, but let us instantly part before offences arise. Thou wilt meet with strange company too in my carriage; and if ever it hath happened to thee to travel in a stage-coach,

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coach, it hath perhaps been thy disposition to sit in sullen reserve in a corner, wrapt up in thine own gloomy meditations, looking down with infinite contempt on thy fellow-travellers in so vulgar a vehicle, who yet were, in that instance at least, on an equality with thee:—or, perhaps, thou hast been petulantly ready to quarrel with every thing said or done—with the windows, for letting in too much or too little light—with the coachman, for driving too fast or too slow—with the coach, for being ill hung, or incommo-
diously contrived—and with every innkeeper on the road, for not having consulted in the fare provided, the peculiar taste of an unknown and unexpected passenger in a stage-coach. If thou art of this carping turn, my good friend, I do not invite thee to join this my journey; yet, if thou dost insist upon accompanying me, I promise thee, I shall not much attend to thy observations; feed on thy discontent in thy own petulant humors, shut thyself up in thy own gloomy reflections. But if thou art of a temper benign, and

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communicative, come with me, and welcome. Share all the amusement my travels may bestow; let us enjoy together the good accommodations we may chance to meet with, and I will laugh with thee at the bad ones: and, believe me, if thou canst not do this, thou art not fit to undertake a journey in any vehicle but Sterne's disobligant, nor with any company but the self-important being it was calculated to contain.

Perhaps I am myself not without my faults; perhaps I may be a little despotie, and insist on my companions being pleased with the same objects that please me—liking the same persons that I like—and abusing the very circumstances that I condemn. But, when I recollect that it is my part to provide entertainment through the whole of the journey, I must own I think some little deference due to my opinions.

Having premised thus much, I will make thee wait no longer. We begin our journey at least under happy auspices; the sun is bright, the horses fresh, the vehicle sound,
and

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and the passengers warned not to expect continued and uninterrupted amusement. They will, at least, have this advantage over me, that whenever they become disgusted or tired, the door may be opened, and they have only to step out, and find themselves at home. But I must persevere to the end, and take my chance either of gaining friends and applauders, or of drawing down on my devoted head abuse, ridicule, and a thousand terrible *et ceteras*.

It was in a factoring office in the month of July, that Mr. Seale, the parish priest of a small obscure village in the county of Cornwall, walked forth to enjoy the cool shade of the breeze, and to visit some of his humble parishioners. The village of Linnwood might well be deemed a happy one: its situation was beautiful—it was healthy—it had no lawyer, no doctor, no ruin—and it had—Mr. Seale. Mr. Seale indeed had no real friends—all equally cultivated with him—not even a petty pedagogue existed in the village. **CHAP.**

CHAP. II.

"A man he was, to all the country dear,
And passing rich."——

GOLDSMITH.

IT was in a fine evening in the month of July, that Mr. Searle, the parish priest of a small obscure village in the county of Cumberland, walked forth to enjoy the cool freshness of the breeze, and to visit some of his humble parishioners. The village of Linwood might well be deemed a happy one: its situation was beautiful—its air healthy—it had no lawyer, no doctor, no squire—and it had—Mr. Searle. Mr. Searle indeed had no neighbours at all equally cultivated with himself; not even a petty pedagogue existed in this primitive region, to bandy the weapons of

of learning in contest with the parson; but that parson had that native benevolence of mind which could reach him to discover virtue and goodness in the rude soil of a rustic's heart, and that happy and endearing manner which enabled him to call forth those qualities into action. He had, indeed, a sister who lived with him, but as he had also eleven brothers and sisters who did not live with him, and as their common parent had been, like himself, a country parson, they had not received much advantage from the improved state of education in this country. Wilford, indeed, in order to qualify him for the duties of the ministry, had received a sufficient portion of classical and theological learning from his father, and had kept his terms at the University; but Miss Searle had had no instruction but in the necessary art of the needle, and housewifely accomplishments; no lessons of philosophy, but to do as she was bid, to come when she was called, and to speak when she was spoken to.—Happily, however, Mr. Searle, who had a peculiar

knack at discovering the intrinsic value of a rough diamond, had always, from childhood, loved his sister Mary with peculiar affection; and when, at the age of twenty-seven, he obtained the preferment he now possessed, and which actually amounted to fifty-seven pounds, thirteen shillings, and seven-pence halfpenny a year, he invited his sister Mary, whose views in life were not very exalted, to share with him the independent affluence to which he was raised.

To the cultivation of her mind, Mr. Searle devoted all the time which could be spared from his parochial duties; and though he had not made her a learned woman, (indeed, it must be confessed he had not tried) he had so far called forth the natural talents she was born with, that she could converse on any subject with ease and fluency, received the greatest pleasure from reading, and in her remarks, both on books and passing events, often astonished, and always delighted the University-bred brother.

Her

Her establishment with her brother, however, and the consequent enlargement of her mind, had prevented her accepting an offer of marriage from a substantial farmer in the neighbourhood, who would have kept her a chaise-cart, and who, in every respect, would have overtopped her ambition, before she lived at Linwood parsonage; but she now preferred the humble fare and elegant society of her brother, to the hospitable board, and unpolished manners, of her opulent admirer; and both Mr. Searle and his sister Mary were fast verging towards the state of old bachelor, and old maid, at the very time when Mr. Searle set out for his aforementioned walk, in which his sister Mary would certainly have accompanied him, had she not been called to the bed-side of a poor woman, who was at the point of death, having laboured many months under an inveterate consumption. Mr. Searle, then, pursued his walk alone, and having visited some of his parishioners, was returning homeward, admiring the fine glow of the sunset, as

it sunk just to the left of an enormous mountain, which overshadowed a beautiful lake, when his attention was caught by a little boy of about three years old, who was gambolling at the door of a little white cottage, and who endeavoured, by a thousand little antics, to attract the notice of the benevolent minister. Mr. Searle determined to pay a visit at this cottage; and walking in, was welcomed by its inmates with the utmost cordiality. Every rustic in the parish was delighted on receiving such a favour from their excellent pastor, and the good woman of the house, in her hurry to reach a chair for Mr. Searle, overturned a table, on which stood a basin of milk, which was, of course, completely demolished.

"Poor Harry," cried she, "I have spoilt your supper."

"Was that milk for Harry?" asked Mr. Searle.

"Yes, and please your Reverence," replied she, with a curtsy, "and I have never another drop in the house."

"Never mind," said Mr. Searle, "he shall go home with me, and have his supper; 'tis a loss very easily supplied. But pray tell me, Mrs. Edmonds, if you have ever heard from the poor child's friends."

"Never a word, believe me, Sir," said she, "and John and I were just talking the matter over, when your Reverence came in. My John, you must know, Sir, is very desirous to bring him up to the plough; but I can't bear the thoughts on't, because I know he's come of parents that be better than we, and if he was our own boy, we could but bring him up to the plough."

"And pray, Jenny," interrupted John Edmonds (who was eating a lump of coarse brown bread, with the best sauce in the world, an excellent appetite)—"and pray, Jenny, what else can we do? our pockets ben't long enough to give him learning, and 'prentice him out; and as for letting him run wild about here, a-doing o' nothing at all, why that's neither one thing nor t'other, and neither his parents, if ever they come to

claim him, nor he himself, when he grows up, will ever thank us for that. No, no, Jenny; if I make him a hard-working man like myself, I shall learn him how to get his own bread, without being obliged to nobody for it, and that's much better than running a'ter wild schemes of the Lord knows what."

"Well, husband," said Jenny, "now I hope you ha' done; and now, don't you think you mought as well have axed his Reverence here to give us a little advice, as to have gone on laying down the law as you ha' done; for my part, I think 'twould be a shame. Only look at that lovely skin—was that made to be burnt like a plough-boy's? and them pretty delicate hands, that look for all the world like a fine lady's. But I beg your Worship's pardon," quoth Jenny, addressing Mr. Searle, "mayhap you would be so good as to direct us about this here boy, and I hope you'll forgive my husband and me for being so bold."

"I am very well pleased, my good Mrs. Edmonds," replied Mr. Searle, "to hear

your natural opinions respecting the management of this boy, and I must say I think you are both right and both wrong. There is a great deal of reason in what your husband says in favour of making him a labourer. Independence is the most desirable thing in the world; and no man who has health and ability to work, is to be pitied; but then, again, if ever he should be demanded back by his parents, they might not, as you observe, be so well pleased to have him sunburnt, and grown coarse and rough with hard labour. At present, however, it is not necessary to decide; he is yet too young to go to plough, and if you will let him go home with me, my sister will give him a basin of bread and milk, and we will think further about him, for he is really a charming boy."

"Oh Lord! Sir," cried John Edmonds, "he is indeed a charming boy;—why, if you'll believe me, he knows every house in the village by his name, and he and my dog Bob, I am sure, might be trusted with the care of a large flock of sheep."

"Indeed,

"Indeed," interrupted Mrs. Edmonds, "he is a most charming boy—Lord love him, I could cry over him when I sees his pretty ways; and how he puts me in mind of my dear young lady as I had the care of from an infant; she had just such hair as our Harry, just for all the world the same colour, for I remember stealing a lock of her hair off her pretty head, one day as she laid asleep in my lap; and I have kept it ever since, and will keep it to my dying day. I have often laid it upon his head, to compare it to his'n. Come hither, Harry, Harry Melbourne!"

The boy capered up to her, and clambering up on her lap, kissed her very heartily; when the good woman, reprimanding him for not minding his manners to Mr. Searle, produced out of an old letter-case, a little auburn ringlet, which she laid on Harry's head, and difficult it was to decide whether it had grown there or not, so precisely was it the shade of his own luxuriant locks.

"Come,

"Come, Harry," said Mr. Searle, "will you go home with me, and get some supper?—and do you walk with us, Jenny, for I want to hear all the particulars of this boy's being given to you; as for your husband, I see he's stolen away—to bed, I suppose."

"Aye," said she, "John works hard all day, and is glad enough to get to bed of an evening. Come, Harry;" and with these words she took hold of Harry's hand, and following Mr. Searle, shut the door of her cottage after her, and tripped away to the parsonage.

CHAP. III.

THE INSIDE OF A PARSONAGE.

"The refuge of th' unshelter'd poor,

"And strangers led astray." GOLDSMITH.

WHEN Mr. Searle and his two companions were within a few yards of the parsonage, they perceived Miss Searle advancing to the little wicket, and looking earnestly around. No sooner had she cast her eyes on the approaching group, than, opening the wicket, she eagerly advanced to them, seized her brother's hand, exclaiming, "Oh Wilford!" and burst into tears. Mr. Searle affectionately pressed to his lips the hand which

which grasped his own, and tenderly enquired the meaning of her tears. "My dear Wilford," said she, I am glad you are returned; I have been witnessing, for the first time in my life, the awful visitation of death!"—

"What, is poor Mrs. Clayford dead then?" asked Mr. Searle.

"Indeed she is," replied Miss Searle, "and the affliction of her poor girls is beyond description!"

By this time they had reached the humble entrance of the parsonage-house, into which Mr. Searle cordially invited Mrs. Edmunds; and drawing a chair for her, seated himself beside his sister Mary, and resumed the hand he had been obliged to relinquish.

"Brother," said Miss Searle, "I hope you observe I have been preparing a treat for you; I thought I would indulge you this evening with a dish of tea."

"And you must indulge my young visiter here with a basin of bread and milk, as through civility to me, his supper, poor fellow, has been demolished."

Why,

"Why, Harry," said Miss Searle, smiling through the tears that yet stood in her eyes, "have you nothing to say to me, have you quite forgotten me?"

"No," replied Harry, "I remember you very well; and I remember too you gave me my letters in gingerbread."

"And do you remember the letters, Melbourne," said Mr. Searle.

"No, that I don't," cried Harry.

"Well, no matter, my man, we shall soon recover that piece of knowledge.—But come, Mary, pour out the tea, and give Mrs. Edmonds a cup."

"Nay," said Miss Searle, "I dare say Melbourne is very eager for his supper, and I shall soon have served him, and then we may enjoy our tea without interruption."

Miss Searle arose, and in a minute returned with a plentiful mess for Harry, who viewed it with no small complacence, and fell to with an extraordinary good appetite. Mrs.

Edmonds asked if Mrs. Clayford died easily, and made a good end; "Though indeed," added

added she, "one can't doubt that; for your reverend brother there has prayed by her every day for a long time past."

"That alone, Mrs. Edmonds," replied Mr. Searle, "would not have insured her making a good end, though I acknowledge it to be a very useful and necessary help towards it; but Mrs. Clayford had passed a virtuous and good life, and had truly done her duty towards her husband and her children: this is the best and only certain preparation for a happy and comfortable death. And poor woman, she had so long languished under her irresistible disorder, that I dare say she suffered very little from the immediate separation of soul and body.—Was not her life easily extinguished, Mary?"

"Why, indeed, brother," answered Miss Searle, "considering the long and severe illness she had had, I was surprised that she suffered so much as she did.—She retained her senses to the last moment, and gave very proper advice and directions to her three poor

poor daughters, who were sobbing by her bed-side."

"And how did Ben Clayford, her husband, take it?" asked Mrs. Edmonds. "He han't been one of the best in all Linwood parish."

"The poor man seemed much affected," replied Miss Searle, "and when the breath was out of his wife's body, he kissed her lips, and then kissed his girls, and told them they must never forget what their mother had said to them; for she was a good woman, and he had not deserved her. In short," said Miss Searle, whose tears were flowing very fast, "the scene was almost too much for me, and I began to think you very late, Wilford!"

"The sight of death is certainly very affecting," said Mr. Searle; "yet it is what we all ought to witness occasionally; nor ought we to seek to chase too suddenly from our hearts, the impression of such a scene;—it is the best and most persuasive monitor to convince us of the vanity and inefficacy of the things we most desire; and the remembrance

brance is of itself too apt to die away. However, for the present, we will dismiss the subject, as I am certain my Mary will often bring home to her own heart, the recollection of poor Mrs. Clayford's death-bed."

"That indeed I shall," whispered Miss Searle.

"And now," resumed Mr. Searle, "I want to hear from Mrs. Edmonds, all the circumstances she can recollect respecting young Melbourne's first living with her."

"Oh! I remember it all one as though it had been but yesterday," replied Mrs. Edmonds, "and I'll tell you all about it. Mayhap your Reverence don't know, that afore ever I married, and settled in Linwood parish, I was nursery-maid in Sir George Meredith's family, where I had a cousin as was housekeeper; and I had the care of sweet Miss Emily Meredith, from the day she was weaned. Your Reverence knows I was showing you a lock of her hair, for all the world just like Harry's. Well, Sir, and so Miss Emily was sent to school, and I had the care of

of some of the younger ones ; but I ne'er loved none like my sweet Emmy : but when they was all outgrewed the nursery, somewhat, I know not what, (for sarvants never knows the truth of things) happened in Sir George's family, and several of the sarvants was sent away, and I among the rest ; and there was talk that they wanted to make Miss Emily marry an old Lord that usist to come to the house, and was very rich ; but he was very old, and very ugly, and very covetous ; and poor Miss Emmy could not bear the thoughts of it ; for one day, when I had agreed to marry John Edmonds, who told me his father had left him a cottage at Linwood, the same where we now live, Sir, I went to call o' Miss before I married, and went to settle so far away : so when I got to the house in Grosve-square, my cousin the housekeeper says to me, says she, ' Jenny,' says she ' I don't think you can see my young lady now, for we're all in commotion, because she won't marry Lord ——— ; plague take his name, I can't think on't—but no matter.' So I persuaded

persuaded my cousin to go and ax Miss just to see me, and so I was had up into her dressing-room. I shall never forget how pretty and mournful she looked; and she spoke so sweet to me, and wished me happy with John Edmonds; and poor pretty creature, she sighed, and the tears trickled down her pale cheeks. 'Ah Miss Emmy,' said I, 'I wish you a good husband yourself, and a deal of happiness; for I'm sure if ever mortal flesh deserved to be happy, you do.'—'No, Jenny,' says she, 'happiness is not for me; they were her very words. I'm sure I shall never forget them; I cried to hear her say 'em, and so she gave me some money, and some of her clothes;—and so says I, 'Ah, Miss Emmy,' says I, 'here's what I value more nor all your clothes and your money,' and so I shewed her the little lock of hair;—'Look ye,' says I, 'I stole this off your dear head the day you was three years old, and I was so afraid my Lady should see it,' for she always cut Miss Emmy's hair herself;—and so Miss Emmy cried, and said, 'Good by, Jenny;

Jenny; I must not stay any longer now. I wish you very well and very happy, and shall always be glad to hear of your welfare, or to see you.' And so I thanked her, and came away, and the very next day I married John Edmonds, and came down to Linwood; and here I had lived for a couple of years, or more, and had had two children, and buried 'em both, when one day some one tapped at my cottage-door, and I opened it, and who should it be but my cousin the housekeeper; and I was so surpris'd, I could hardly ax her in;—howsever I did, and when I had looked at her a while, and shewed her my house, and told her as how I had lost my two blessed babies, and so forth, I axed a'ter Sir George Meredith's family, and sweet Miss Emmy; but my cousin could tell me nothing about 'em, not even whether Miss Emmy had married the old lord; for she said, the family left London, and went to settle down in Wales, and she had had a place in Berkshire ever since. But I am a sad hand at remembering o' names, and I can't think of them
for

for the soul o' me. Howsever, now to come to Harry;—my cousin axed me if I had any objection to take a child in to nurse—that I should be well paid for it: and so I axed a few questions about the child, and she told me it was come of good parents, but that the mother was sickly, and could not bear the noise of a child, and the father was not very fond of young children; so I thought it was a pity it should be left to such unnatural parents, as did not care for their own flesh and blood, and I agreed to take it. And I was to be paid so much for this, and so much for that, and my cousin was to take care that I had the mouey, and a deal more palaver. But the short and the long on't was, that she brought me the boy, which was our Harry Melbourne, and she told me that was not the name of his parents, for that just now they did not own their marriage, and that that was the reason they wanted to send their child away. So I said as how that did not agree with t'other story; and when I told her so, she seemed a little confused, somehow; but she

promised me that it should very soon be all cleared up, and in the mean while I should be very well paid ; and that the father or the mother would write to me, and tell me where to write them word about the child ; but from that day to this, and 'tis now three years and four months ago, I have seen nor heard nothing of my cousin, nor o' the boy's father and mother, nor had a single farthing of money, over and above the five guineas she gied me with the child ; to be sure that lasted me a good while for him, and it mought ha' lasted me longer, but I thought as how he, being a gentleman's child, should be drest better than a poor body's ;—but my last boy was but just gone, and I had a fine breast of milk which was now and then rather troublesome to me, so I gave that to young Harry, who was not three months old, and he thriv surprisingly. I would ha' writ to my cousin, but she left me no direction, and I could n't remember the name, neither of the place nor the people. Howsever, I can't say as I've ever be'n sorry as I took Harry, though

I've been paid nothing for him, for he ha' been like a child of my own, and my heart's comfort; for I ha' never bred again—so I take it to be God's will that I should ha' this boy instead of one of my own;—God love him, he's fast asleep on the couch. I'll take him home, and put him to bed, without waking him, I'll warrant."

With these words, Mrs. Edmonds arose, and making her best curtsy to Mr. Searle and his sister, took up her little charge, and trudged home with him, while Mr. Searle and Mary walked slowly across their little lawn, and seated themselves on a bench which he had placed under an oak, so as to command a very fine view of the lake, the mountain, and the forest, which were now all beautifully illumined by the radiance of the full moon. As they sat, they could observe Mrs. Edmonds arrive with her burthen at the door of her own little cottage, enter it, and shut the door after her; and not having, till then, spoken a syllable, Mr. Searle broke

the silence, with the exclamation of "Honest-hearted creature!"

"She is a good soul, indeed," said Miss Searle, "but terribly long in telling her story. I was once or twice on the point of interrupting her, as you perceived, Wilford; for had not your looks checked me, I should have begged her to let Miss Meredith's story alone, and make haste to what we wanted to know, the first introduction of little Harry."

"Why, you cannot expect very laconic expressions from Jenny Edmonds, you know, Mary," replied Mr. Searle; but I own I was charmed to observe her affectionate heart expand as she talked of Miss Meredith; I did not wish to lose a syllable of her story. Besides, I fancied it might be possible to trace some connection between her dear Miss Emmy, and her little ward."

"For some time I had the same idea," replied Miss Searle; "but the conclusion of her story destroyed it."

"Entirely," replied Mr. Searle; "at least if any such connection does exist, there
is

is nothing in Mrs. Edmonds's relation to lead one to discover it. I own I am much interested in the fate of that unfortunate Emily."

"Oh, so am I," replied Miss Searle, "and the whole is so obscure, so tantalizing, I would give any thing to know whether she married that old lord."

"I fear she did," answered he sighing; "and in such a manner, many young creatures are sacrificed to mistaken ideas of necessity, in order to keep up the vain splendour they have been accustomed to."

"Poor creatures," said Miss Searle; "Oh how they would envy us, Wilford, could they but know what it was to live like us."

"Perhaps, Mary," replied he, "after having been used to greater shew, and more brilliant amusements, our simple content would not excite their envy; nay, our placid happiness might be despised by them."

"Perhaps so," said she; "the more's the pity!"

CHAP. IV.

VILLAGE MEMOIRS.

“The short, but simple annals of the poor.”

THE succeeding morning, when Mr. Seale returned from a solitary lounge over the dewy top of the mountain, he found his sister Mary, while she waited breakfast for him, tying up some straggling branches of the woodbine and jessamine, that hung over the arched window of their little parlour. As soon as she saw him, she quitted her employment with a smile, and welcomed him home with a look of such cordial affection, that Wilford, as he impressed a fraternal kiss on her lips, thanked the great Giver of all good for

for blessing him with such a sister. As they took their frugal repast together, they renewed the conversation of the preceding evening.

"I have been thinking, sister Mary," said Mr. Searle, "as I walked, of little Melbourne."

"So have I," she replied, "and I wish, Wilford——"

"What does my Mary wish?" asked he.

"That something comfortable and advantageous could be done for him."

"So do I," replied Mr. Searle: "and yet, unless one could foresee his future destiny, one might, perchance, do him more harm than good."

"A good education, Wilford, could surely never be a detriment to him."

"A good, at least a decent education," said Mr. Searle, "I certainly could, and would willingly give him, were I convinced of the truth of your assertion, Mary, or were I able to follow it up with any pecuniary services; but if this boy is to be left for life with John Edmonds, to work his way as a common labourer,

labourer, shall I not have injured him, by raising his mind above his fortune, and rendering him averse to the station he is destined to occupy?"

"Surely, brother," answered Miss Searle, "he never can be destined for a common labourer; he seems made of far superior materials."

"That is a good augury, Mary, but no proof. As he is at present, he will be as well off as every other child in the village; and that station ought never to be reprobated, which the majority are destined to fill. Nor can it be an ineligible one, as far as concerns real happiness and welfare. Melbourne, under the care of Edmonds, will be made perfectly independent, and useful to society. If he is good and industrious, he will always be secure of a provision; whereas, if I cultivate his mind, and render him unfit for the plough, I shall certainly rob society of an useful labourer, and shall not so certainly repay the theft with an accomplished and virtuous student. Besides that, when he has acquired these

these refined ideas, I shall not have money or power to place him in a situation suitable to them. There are the moments, my sister, when we feel our little competence insufficient. For common charities our income suffices; a little is of service to the cottager, but it is when mind is the seat of suffering, when genius is oppressed by penury, and talents are buried in obscurity."

"True, my dear brother," interrupted Miss Searle, "I do not often cut short the thread of your discourse, because I am sure to be a loser by it; but just allow me to ask, if Melbourne possesses those brilliant talents you are describing, whether you will not be doing society a greater service by enabling him to distinguish himself, than by suffering that genius to be buried indeed in ignorance and uncultivation. Should he be less great than we are now supposing, the sea, the sword, are always open; and in one or other of these, surely a man of an active mind would always find means to provide for, and to distinguish himself."

At least, my dear girl," said Mr. Searle, kissing the hand which Mary had rested on his arm, "at least we may compromise the matter; Harry is yet too young either to follow the plough, or to study the classics. Let us therefore watch his young mind, and follow the bent of his natural character. Should he be fond of study, I fear, even if I were convinced I was not serving him, I could not help encouraging and assisting him."

Indeed, as you say, Wilford, we need not decide it now," said Mary, smiling at the half concession she had obtained; "there is another subject demands more immediate attention;—what is to become of Fanny Clayford?—the girl is near sixteen, and a great deal too pretty to be suffered to run wild about the village, only employing herself at day labour in the fields; and there is no family hereabouts that keeps a girl but ourselves, and we cannot discard Sally, otherwise I am sure Fanny is a handy girl."

"Suppose, Mary," replied Mr. Searle,

"we

"we ramble down to Ben Clayford's cottage, and see what they propose themselves. Our services will be more acceptable if we follow the bent of their inclinations, than if we were to suggest a plan for them."

Miss Searle took her straw hat, and as she tied it on, she said, "there is your favourite principle again, Wilford; you applied it just now to little Harry."

"I did so, Mary," said he, drawing her arm within his own, "and I believe it to be a just one; in point of education, I feel almost convinced that it is an infallible one. If you endeavour to force the mind to take a particular bent, to which it is not naturally inclined, ten to one but you warp the whole intellect, and can never obtain the same advantages as by watching the native bias of the soul, and following that impulse, which points invariably to some particular study or occupation."

"I perfectly agree with you," replied Mary, "as, indeed, how can I differ from you, my tutor? but is it not possible that

this plan, pursued too far, may authorise indecision, and establish a habit of irresolution?"

"Any system, my dear Mary, pursued too far, will infallibly lead to some evil consequence; and this is the great fault of your system-mongers in general; they are so determined to adopt their favourite principle to every occasion, that, to use the old allusion of the bed of Procrustes, sometimes they extend even to torture, and sometimes lop away even to the vitals; and I am always grateful when my Mary warns me against falling into this too common error."

"My dearest brother," replied Mary, "when I remarked you again recurring to your favourite principle, believe me, I meant to apprise you of no error. I thought you perfectly right; and I have no doubt but that the Clayfords, like all other human beings, would be more thankful for services which accorded with their own inclinations, than for the most excellent advice which thwarted them."

Mary

Mary looked up in her brother's face with a countenance expressive of some small anxiety ; but as he pressed her arm, which was locked in his, closer to his heart, and smiled upon her with extreme affection, her gravity vanished, and a flush of pleasure passed across her cheek.

As they passed Mrs. Edmonds's door, little Harry was playing on the green, and espying Mr. Searle and his sister, he flew to them.—“ Let me go with you,” said he, looking up in their faces with earnest solicitation.

“ With all my heart,” said Mr. Searle ; “ but you must be a very good boy, and not make a noise.”

“ Indeed I will be very good,” said the child, “ and only speak when you speak to me.”

“ Run in then,” said Miss Searle, “ and tell Mrs. Edmonds you are going with us, or she will think you are tumbled into the lake.”

Harry in a moment executed his message, and flew with alacrity to join Mr. Searle and

his sister, who were both of them doated on by all the children in the village. He chattered to them the whole way; but when they reached Clayford's cottage, Mr. Searle renewed his injunctions of silence, and Harry's little countenance assumed the profoundest gravity. Mr. and Miss Searle entered the dwelling with all the respect due to sorrow; and found the eldest girl, Fanny, inconsolable for the death of her mother, and still more inconsolable because her father had chosen this moment of her extreme grief, to press her to marry old Idford the butcher; who being extremely struck with Fanny's pretty face, had agreed to take her youngest sister Bersey into the house also. This offer was too advantageous for Ben Clayford to refuse, though poor Fanny urged that Idford was between fifty and sixty, noted for his drunkenness and ill humour; that he had already buried three wives, and had several children older than herself.

"Yes, yes," said the surly father, nowise restrained by the presence of Mr. Searle and his

his sister, "I believe though you'd snap at the old man, if you had not got the young one in your head—if Will Idford would but say as much as his father, aye, or half as much; for you are a forward jade."

Poor Fanny with tears replied, "You know, father, I have promised not to marry Will Idford, unless you give me leave; but indeed, indeed, I cannot marry old Idford."

"Indeed, Mr. Clayford," said Mr. Searle, "it is by no means a suitable match for your daughter Fanny, nor is this a proper time to urge her marrying at all, just when she is full of sorrow for her mother's death."

"A fiddle-stick of her sorrow," replied the savage father; "she'd forget her sorrow in the arms of a young husband, but she won't ha' one of my chusing. Nor it an't well of you, Doctor, to come and teach children to be disobedient and obstinate. I mought have all my girls provided for; for there's their aunt Walker, as comes to market at our town, would take Poll; and butcher Idford would marry Fan, and take Bet."

Bet into his house, and then I should be free of the world again: but to be sure the impudent slut will set her face against it now you encourage her in her wilfulness. Is that the best you can teach, Doctor, for children to disobey their fathers?"

"Pray, is Will Idford ready to marry her directly, as well as his father?" asked Mr. Searle.

"He does not dare to say the word, Sir," said Fanny, "for fear of angering his father, who would turn him out of doors."

Miss Searle smiled, and Mr. Searle spoke again to Ben Clayford. "I suppose, Clayford, you would have no objection to Fanny's marrying William Idford, if your youngest daughter was also provided for."

"Not I," said Ben, "she may go to the devil, and marry him, if she will; I don't care a damn who she marries."

"For shame," said Mr. Searle, "how can you talk so, with the dead body of your wife now in the house. Come, Fanny, dry up your tears, we will endeavour to arrange
this

this business; but do you hear, Clayford, no talk of your daughter's wedding till after Sunday, when your wife will be buried. Little Betsey shall be taken care of, one way or other."

Fanny's eloquent eyes thanked Mr. Searle, who, after a little more good advice to her father, departed; leaving little Melbourne at Mrs. Edmonds's cottage as he passed in his way home.

Mr. Searle was generally respected in the village, and had that influence over his parishioners, that he could almost always prevail on them to follow his advice:—they saw plainly that he consulted their own good in the counsel he gave them. And to this universal esteem for their worthy pastor, it must be attributed that he succeeded in persuading old Idford to relinquish the blooming Fanny to his son William; who eagerly agreed to take her, though saddled with the incumbrance of little Betsey. History records, with singular praise, the art and eloquence of the physician who so awakened the generosity and paternal love of King Seleucus.

Seleucus, that he resigned his favourite bride, the fair Stratonice to his dying son Antiochus. Be it mine to celebrate the skill and persuasive powers of our village pastor, and the far more heroic self-denial of the butcher. King Seleucus saw his son dying for love of a fair object whom he himself had long possessed. Old Idford saw his son in all the vigour of health, urging his youth and manly strength as superior claims for the possession of a lovely untouched virgin; and who shall say, what keen regrets, what sharp reflections the old man would make on his solitary pillow, on the happy night that consigned the luxuriant charms of the lovely Fanny to the arms of his envied son? How must we ever regret that the conversation in which Mr. Searle accomplished this desirable end, passed in such entire privacy, that the arguments he used, must ever remain an impenetrable secret! Perhaps he represented to the old man, the constant and invidious comparisons Fanny would naturally make between himself in the decline, and William in the prime of life. Perhaps

Perhaps he awakened some fears for future consequences, which the real innocence of Fanny never would have realized. But these are mere conjectures; and we only know, that Fanny ever acknowledged the most ardent gratitude to Mr. Searle for his interference and success in this important affair; and therefore we may conclude that William Idford, who was really an industrious, worthy, and honest, as well as a robust and handsome lad, never gave her cause in any way to regret the accepting him, instead of his father.

CHAP. V.

A RURAL DEBATE.

SINCE the benevolent idea of contributing to the future establishment of Harry Melbourne had taken possession of Miss Searle and her brother, they constantly made the child the companion of their walks; and, by degrees, he recommended himself so much to the worthy pair, that he lived infinitely more at Linwood Parsonage, than at Edmonds's cottage; and as his young mind unfolded itself, Mr. Searle saw, or fancied he saw (and Miss Searle was not backward to assist his discoveries) daily increasing symptoms of talents and of sensibility. Before he was four years old, Mr. Searle was fully convinced

vinced that bringing him up to the plough would be completely thwarting nature, and accordingly determined to impart to his little favourite all the knowledge of every kind he himself possessed.

One evening, after a long ramble among the romantic woods and mountains in the neighbourhood of Linwood, in which, as usual, Harry Melbourne had been their companion, Mr. and Miss Searle called to deposit their young charge at Mrs. Edmonds's cottage, where he still continued to sleep, and which therefore retained the name of his home, though he lived all day long at the parsonage. It so happened, that John Edmonds and his wife were sitting together at the door of their cottage; and as the party approached, John arose, and bowing, said, "Wife and I were just talking of your Reverence and little Harry, and wondering whether you had determined what was best to be done with him."

Mr. Searle and his sister seated themselves on the oaken bench, and motioning for Edmonds

monds to resume his seat, Mrs. Edmonds addressed the worthy minister. "You must know, Sir, as my husband says as how 'tis time for the boy to begin earning a penny now and then, to be sure he mought be taught to keep sheep, or pick up stones, or weed a bit, or so; but sure, sure, he's young enough yet."

"So you'd say till he was ten years old, Jenny," replied Edmonds; "but I know by the time I was his age, I begun to do a many little matters of work; and I know, if so be as he went out with me, he'd soon earn salt to his porridge, and come on by degrees, till he'd be a great help and comfort to me. Indeed, your Reverence, Jenny knows well enough I love the boy; and many a time and often, when we have been hard put to it for a bit of bread, instead of fretting that the money was never sent as it was promised us, have we comforted ourselves for the cost of his keep, and I have said to myself, 'Ah well, John Edmonds, God Almighty took away your own two boys, and here this boy will

will be like your own child, and he'll go to work with you, and be your companion as they would have been."

"Now Sir, Mr. Searle," said Mrs. Edmonds, "wouldn't it be a mortal shame and a sin to set that dear little angel to pick up stones, and the like? Why he looks the very moral of a nobleman's son; and there, by and by, when he's seven or eight years old, mayhap, comes down his noble parents, enquires for my Lord Harry Melbourne, or whatsomever else his true name may be; and there they finds him a little, ragged, dirty, son-burnt sheep-boy, instead of that fine, noble, gracious creature 'tis now. Do, your Reverence, look at him; is n't he a lovely child?"

Mr. Searle and his sister smiled at each other, to observe the natural goodness of heart in both, and the difference circumstances had made between the ideas of John Edmonds and his wife. John had been all his life a hard-working countryman; Jenny had been maid-servant in a genteel and fashionable family. Lords and Dukes were
to

to John Edmonds like comets; Kings he might, perhaps, sometimes chance to hear of, but never to see. Jenny was, comparatively speaking, familiar with nobility; and so strongly was she possessed with the idea that Harry was come of some great family, that she was perpetually tracing fantastical likenesses between him and some of the grandee visitors she had seen at Sir George Meredith's, when she attended the younger children to the parlour-door. We will not build much on these resemblances, since it is possible Jenny's knowledge of the great folks she talked of so readily, might at no time be very intimate; and it is hardly to be supposed, that after an interval of six or seven years, her remembrance of them could be very correct.

"Indeed, my good friends," said Mr. Searle, "you are both, in a degree, in the right. If Harry is to be left entirely on your hands——"

"And what else can we expect," said John Edmonds, in an under voice.

"Hold

"Hold your tongue," said Jane, in rather a louder key.)

—"you would, no doubt, be perfectly right to bring him up to get his own livelihood in an honest and industrious way; and the man who does his duty in that line of life, is as worthy, and as independent (if not more so) than the most opulent nobleman. If, indeed, his parents were ever likely to claim him—but of that I own," said Mr. Searle, sighing, "I see little or no chance."—

"There, Jenny," exultingly cried Mr. Edmonds.

"Well, well," said Jenny, rather impatiently; "but let us hear what his Reverence would think right if his parents were to come and claim him; which, for my part, I think they will; for nature must yearn a'ter its own flesh and blood."

"Why, perhaps, Mrs. Edmonds, in that case," resumed Mr. Searle, "it might be as well not to have made him a plough-boy."

"But what else can we do for him?" said John. "We can't afford to put him to
VOL I. D learning;

learning; and even if he did go to Dame Hodges's, that would n't be much for a lord's child."

"True," said Miss Searle, smiling at John's simplicity.

"And I suppose, my good friends, said Mr. Searle, "you would not give up the care of this boy to me?"

Miss Searle's countenance brightened, and Jenny's fell; but John said, "And what would your Reverence do with him?"

"I would give him all the instruction in my power," replied the worthy minister.

"And so," said Jenny, "our dear Harry would n't be our child any longer, nor call us dad and mammy. Oh John Edmonds! John Edmonds! do you talk of loving him?"

"And do you imagine, Mrs. Edmonds," said Miss Searle, "that my brother would allow him to forget you? or that the child would not always love you as well as he does now?"

"Aye,

"Aye, and a great deal better," added Mr. Searle; "for I believe I should make him more sensible of his obligations to you, than you would yourselves."

"You are always impatient to put in your oar, Jenny," said her husband; "and now you are unthankful besides, or else you'd see how kind his Reverence's offer is. To be sure when the boy grows stouter and stronger, I should like to have a day or two's work out of him, now and then; but if so be as how your Worship would make him just such another as yourself, the King of England might be proud to call him son."

Miss Searle's eyes glistened at this unaffected tribute to her brother's worth, though paid in the clumsy coin John Edmonds used; and turning with a smile to Jenny, she said, "And if you like it best, Mrs. Edmonds, Harry shall still come home to you at night, and sleep here, and call your house his home, and be your child still, only spending the day with my brother."

“ And many days, if he continues at Linwood,” added Mr. Searle, “ may be spared from his studies, to assist Mr. Edmonds in his employments; and I should rather wish he should do so than not.”

“ I’m sure we’re much beholden to your Reverence,” said Mr. Edmonds; “ and I hope Harry will be grateful to you for your goodness all the days of his life.”

“ I dare say he will,” said Miss Searle; “ for he has a very affectionate heart. And now tell me, do you quite approve of this plan, Mrs. Edmonds?”

“ Indeed I do, Miss,” replied she; “ and most humbly do I thank your worthy brother for his kindness; for now my dear Harry will be fit to be a Lord’s son, when it all comes out, as it will one of these days, I’ll be bound for it; and I thank you, Madam, for letting him come home to me o’ nights, for sure I shall always love him as though he were my own.”

This affair being thus settled, Mr. Searle and his sister rose and bent their footsteps towards their humble but happy abode.

CHAP. VI.

AN EVENING WALK.

"With thee conversing, I forget all time."

MILTON.

AS Miss Searle and her brother walked slowly homeward, she said, "And you think, then, Wilford, of permitting Melbourne to work occasionally with Edmonds?"

"Indeed I do, Mary," replied he; "and I think it will have a very good effect. It will undoubtedly strengthen his muscular system, and it will not subject him to harder or meaner exercise than boys take at a public school."

"How so?" said Mary.

D 3

"I need

"I need only," answered Mr. Searle; "instance Eton, where the boys employ their vacant hours in rowing; and a waterman's is surely a meaner occupation than a labourer's."

"True," said Miss Searle; "and I think I have heard you remark it as a custom 'better honoured in the breach than in the observance.'"

"So I have, Mary, and so I still think; but there are many circumstances which render the rowing at Eton far more objectionable than Harry's going now and then to work in the fields. There is more bad language, aye, and bad principles, to be learned in one day upon the Thames among the watermen, than in a whole life in a country village, among such honest rustics as Edmonds. Besides, the habit of labour will secure him an independence. Though we hope his talents will enable him to make a figure in the world, and though we think it possible his parents may claim him, yet the first is but a hope, the last scarcely probable.

Nor

Nor do I intend to let him know how little connection he has with Edmonds. I shall instil into him all possible deference and affection for him, (which the honest man really deserves) and shall avoid teaching him to look forward hereafter to any exaltation in the world."

"There seems, in Melbourne the best groundwork in the world for you to build upon," said Miss Searle—"a good head and a good heart; and under your care, brother, the one will not be corrupted, nor the other perverted. At a public school indeed——"

"Ah Mary! public schools are noble institutions, and possess many advantages which private tuition can never attain; they give, without pain or thought, all that fixity of manners, all that accommodating disposition, so necessary to carry a man smoothly through life, and which I trust you will believe may be very distinct from fawning servility, or extravagant pliability."

"Were they not very different from these my Wilford, and perfectly consistent with

true dignity of character, I am sure," replied Miss Searle, "you would not commend them; but surely many points in morality, and many very valuable attainments, will be more attended to in a private than in a public education."

"Undoubtedly," said Mr. Searle; "and I believe lads might be more thoroughly and more properly grounded in all literary attainments also. But for a man who is to mix in the world, who is to consider himself as born for society——"

("Let us lengthen our walk," said Mary, perceiving they had reached their wicket.)

——"as dependent upon, and connected with the whole race of mankind," continued Mr. Searle, "a public education is invaluable. Lads brought up at home are apt to consider themselves as of infinite consequence; at a public school they are only valued for their real merits."

"Do you suppose, then," asked Miss Searle, "the general mass of the boys good judges

judges of real merit? or are they influenced by their master?"

"In the judgments they pass on the merits of their school fellows, they certainly will be guided by no one," replied Mr. Searle; "but the mass of the boys, like the mass of the people, have a better capacity in judging of characters than they are generally supposed to have. If you carry your observations through life, you will find that the character or nickname a boy has brought with him from school, is generally applicable to him at any distant period. It is, perhaps, an unpleasant consideration, but it is certainly a true one, that this mode of appretiating characters has more weight in forming moral habits, than any arguments we can urge. A boy who goes into a public school; will immediately see the general disapprobation of the boys passed on lying, ill-humour, malice, gluttony, and all kinds of meanness; and these, at least, are faults which are generally eradicated by a public education."

"And do you then think the censure of the world a sufficient or a proper foundation to build the edifice of morality upon?"

"By no means; all I mean to infer is, that it is a most effectual means of destroying some particular faults. I own the superior advantages of a private education in point of moral and religious excellence; and yet, when I recollect some shining and excellent characters who have been brought up in the usual mode, shall we conclude that they are acting on wrong principles? or shall we not rather hail the institutions which have formed such beings!"

"You are particularly alluding to your friend Spencer."

"I am. Was there ever a more brilliant, and at the same time a more excellent character? Does he not possess every quality to engage the heart, every virtue that adorns human nature, and every talent cultivated to the highest degree? and had not I, even I, humble as I am, had the advantage of a partly public education, I should never

have known this distinguished being, who preserves uncorrupted, even amid the splendour of a Court, his humility, his integrity, his benevolence, his dignity! Oh! if ever I could be fortunate enough to present Melbourne to his notice, I should indeed serve him effectually!"

"And when did you hear from him?" asked Mary.

"I seldom hear," replied Mr. Searle; "our friendship is of a nature which defies the unfrequency of communication. I have that dependence on him, that were I perfectly instructed in his situation, I should not scruple to introduce Melbourne to him, as an object worthy of his care."

"And why do you not then?" said Miss Searle.

"For some time," answered he, "I am able to do for Melbourne all that is necessary. Hereafter, perhaps, I may oblige my friend with a new exercise of his benevolence."

"He is now much engaged at Court, is he not?"

"Since these new arrangements more than ever," said Mr. Searle. "You have never seen him, I think, Mary?"

"Never," she replied, "though I have long wished it."

"If ever it should happen, my dear girl," said Mr. Searle, with a smile, "that he should visit Linwood parsonage, you must take care of your heart, I can tell you."

"My heart would be in no danger from Spencer, my brother, charming as you describe him. I should as soon think of falling in love with any of those bright constellations now in such full splendour before us."

"Were you to witness his humble and easy manners, my Mary," replied Mr. Searle, "you would perhaps forget the distance fortune has made between you, and say to yourself, this never can be the honourable Spencer Montague; this must be some lowly village swain, and I cannot do wrong in loving him."

"However

"However," said Mary, "I am not at present likely to see him; and every year that goes by, takes from the danger of falling in love, as it removes me further from the age of romance; just now, indeed, I feel very romantically inclined, for I have a strong desire to form conjectures on the mystery of Melbourne's birth. Who, or what can he be?"

"Some child of love, I fear," said Mr. Searle; "some stolen offspring which neither parent can avow. Perhaps the child of poor Jenny's darling Emily, or some other equally fair and equally unfortunate."

"Oh! what must be the pangs of a mother," said Miss Searle, "forced to relinquish the dear delight of loving and tending the child of her bosom! Surely it must be a very sufficient punishment for the error she has committed. But why should Miss Meredith occur to your mind? Jenny did not mention any favoured lover of her's, who was set aside by her parents to make room for the old Lord."

True

“True,” replied Mr. Searle; “it was merely a vague idea crossed my brain, and had no foundation; but come, my Mary, we have rambled a long while, and are again within view of the parsonage. I shall tire you to death with such walks.”

“Such a night as this, and such a companion,” said Mary, affectionately pressing her brother’s hand, “would make me forget fatigue and time.”

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CHAP. VII.

tracing the least connection, and often the most
 distant, which prompted any particular
 And yet poor Edwin was no vulgar boy.

BEATTIE.

AS Harry Melbourne advanced in years,
 he gave daily more evident tokens of genius
 and feeling. He received with the greatest
 quickness the instructions which Mr. Searle
 took a pleasure in communicating; and be-
 came, at a very early period, a remarkably
 good Latin scholar, and had some knowledge
 of Greek. But a more extensively useful
 science than classical learning seemed chiefly
 to engage his attention. Every thing that
 bore the name of moral philosophy, every
 thing that tended to introduce harmony and
 order into social life, he read with avidity,
 and

and comprehended with ease. The minute parts of natural history never engaged his attention; but he would converse with Mr. Searle for hours on the general distribution of events recorded in history; seemed to find the greatest gratification in deducing remarkable circumstances from adequate causes; in tracing the least offensive, and often the most real motives which prompted any particular action; and was never so happy as when Mr. Searle indulged him in a logical conversation (for between master and pupil it could hardly be termed an argument) on any of these favourite subjects. Mr. Searle's maxim, with regard to education, was, as we have seen, to follow the direction of nature; and having always thought that a general knowledge of things, as well as a proper explanation of principles, would be better communicated by conversation than by any other mode of instruction, was by no means averse to allow him an indulgence which tended to give him a habit of correct judgment and accurate expression; and the consequence

consequence was, that, at an age when boys in general are very little capable even of reflecting, Harry Melbourne would follow an argument with infinite readiness through every sophism which Mr. Searle could throw over it, in order to try him, develope all his subtilties, and, with an almost mathematical precision, trace every branch of the subject to its parent source. Mr. Searle chiefly promoted these conversations on moral subjects—on the influence of disorderly passions—on the natural and just chain of events—the innate beauty of virtue and true morality, and by every argument contrived at once to strengthen the understanding and the principles of his pupil. And notwithstanding the mode of instruction he had adopted, he cautiously avoided suffering Melbourne to become disputatious in common conversation.

Melbourne's enthusiastic love of poetry was equal, if possible, to his fondness for philosophical disquisitions, and his taste was equal to his love. He was, of course, not confined to regular periods of study, and many times when

when he would willingly have remained at Mr. Searle's elbow the whole day, gathering information from lips so esteemed, that worthy man would order him to take a long ramble among the romantic environs of Linwood;—here a poet was always his companion; here he would read till his soul rose almost to inspiration, the sublime and daring flights with which heaven-born Poesy has from time to time blessed “the astonished world;” and not unfrequently raised into meditation by what he had read, would he wander through the woods, tracing with careless step the devious path, and totally unconscious of the length of time he had been absent from the village. With all this vigour of mind, which enabled him to strike out amusement from every pursuit, and reflection from every object, no female had a heart more tender, more affectionate than Melbourne. His temper and disposition were peculiarly amiable, and the children of the village doated on him, applied to him as their umpire in all debates, courted his company, and imitated his conduct.

duct, as far, at least, as lay within the sphere of their imitation. His behaviour to John Edmonds, indeed, every parent held forth as an example to their own boys; his attention and industry were proverbial, and as his young limbs increased in muscular strength, he gave up so much of his time to the assistance of his worthy reputed father, that it was wonderful how he could devote so large a portion to the studies he devoted on. He became strong, stout, and active; was uncommonly tall of his age; had a manly, muscular figure, and though the native whiteness of his skin was embrowned by the ardent touch of the sun, his countenance was the index of a most intelligent and comprehensive mind, as well as of an amiable and benevolent heart. Such was Melbourne in the village of Linwood, at the age of fifteen; and as such, was the darling of Mr. Searle and his sister Mary.

"Surely, my dear brother," said Miss Searle one day while Melbourne was at work with Edmonds, (days on which they always missed and regretted his company)

surely

surely your pupil would not have been what he is, had he been placed at a public school."

"Undoubtedly he would not," replied Mr. Searle; "and yet I cannot be certain that it would not have been of peculiar advantage to him."

"Oh!" resumed Miss Searle with vivacity, "could he have been in any respect better than he is? And indeed, I wonder particularly to hear you say so; for undoubtedly, the uniform mode of education pursued at those seminaries, militates extremely against your favourite tenet of obeying nature; for let the genius of a boy point ever so strongly to any peculiar study, he is confined, by the rules of the school, for a certain number of years, to Greek and Latin, kept to the drudgery of grammar, and more punished for a failure of memory, or a false quantity, than for a wrong principle, or a weak argument."

"All this is true, Mary," answered Mr. Searle; "and yet, now I have had full conviction, and full experience of the advantages of my own mode (which I must acknowledge

Melbourne

Melbourne well exemplifies) I have also gained a greater acquaintance with its defects. Melbourne has every mark of a superior genius; his talents have acquired a high degree of cultivation, according to their own particular bias; he has infinitely more knowledge of every kind than any lad of his age in any public school on earth; his morals are uncorrupt, and, I trust, his principles are not only good, but firm; and yet, I must confess, Melbourne might have been better, had he been formed at a public school."

"You astonish me, brother," said Miss Searle; "I should have thought Melbourne would have been the very subject you would have chosen to exercise your talents, and prove your system upon."

"He would exactly," replied Mr. Searle; "a boy of a gentle and generous soul, possessing not only distinguished abilities, but a strong bias, is exactly what I should have preferred, and exactly what Melbourne is."

"And why then," asked Mary, "can you imagine that Melbourne could have been

been better formed than he has been by your undeviating attention? At a public school he would have remained undistinguished among the common mass of the boys, would have lagged at the same lessons as a dunce, whose accurate precision, and unremitting labour, would perhaps have produced verse as faultless, and themes as correct as Melbourne's, and therefore equally free from blame, though wanting all the fire of genius, all the depth of reasoning Harry's would have possessed, though they might not have gained more peculiar commendation."

"All that you say, my sister, is perfectly just," replied he; "and these are the very arguments which particularly contributed to fix in me that principle which you call my favourite system. I thought it very hard that a lad of genius should be condemned to the same packhorse labour as a boy whose talents were only to be brightened at all by eternal drudgery; but it is more easy to discover defects, than to apply remedies; and it has been the experience and wisdom of many

many years, which have contrived and arranged the plan of public education. A boy sags through the rudiments of learning at a public school; he learns little more than languages, the art of scanning verses, and of composing indifferent themes. He then goes to a college; he there selects, from amidst the store in his memory, the particular study he prefers; and then at an age, when the mind is more expanded, he has every advantage in that particular branch he has chosen, without having his mind so strongly biassed to it, as to stand in danger of being warped."

"And do you apprehend, then, that Melbourne's mind is warped?"

"I do not at present; but with respect to the particular instance of Melbourne, let me remind you, my dear Mary, that he has had no competitor; he has no idea of talents superior to his own; he feels his own strength, and for the want of more collision with his equals, when he comes to act for himself, he will perhaps contract asperity, pride, gloominess.

You

You remember Sterne's simile of the smooth shillings?"

"Perfectly, my brother; but let me remind you in my turn, that if our Melbourne has no idea of talents superior to his own, he has, by the same rule, none of those inferior. What he comprehends with ease, he would naturally suppose others would comprehend as easily; and feeling, as he does, his own progressive improvement, a mind candid and accurate like his, will naturally ascribe superior attainments to superior advantages; as to age, for instance."—

"All this, my dear Mary, is right enough as it applies to Melbourne now. Melbourne, in the village of Linwood, would undoubtedly have those ideas you describe; but place Melbourne in a circle of forty or fifty boys of his own age, that have followed the usual mode of education; let him talk, let him argue with them, the consciousness of his own pre-eminence instantly takes possession of his mind;—place him among a set older by two or three years, the same conviction will probably

bably speedily take place, and pride and vanity take instant and eternal root in his heart; at least such a consequence is to be apprehended."

"And had he been placed at a public school, would not the same conviction of his own superiority have equally taken place, and the same consequences have been more likely to flow from it, than now that his heart has been fortified by your moral philosophy?"

"I think not," replied Mr. Searle; "I think the habits of society would have prevented it from giving birth to asperity and superciliousness."

"And why are you determined," said Mary, with some chagrin, that our Melbourne shall be proud? Indeed, Wilford, he is now very modest."

"He is so, Mary; but he has not yet breathed the contagious air of the world; and could I, from this time forth, keep him under my own direction, and place him in some obscure nook to study, and from that obscurity communicate his labours to mankind, the

world would be greatly benefited, and the heart and character of Melbourne would be safe."

"And you fear, then," said Miss Searle, "that they will be corrupted when he mingles with the world?"

"Indeed I do," replied Mr. Searle; "I fear at once for his principles and his happiness; in a mind formed like his, they must stand or fall together;—and he has a quickness of feeling that leads to a defect, which, in this retirement, has no room to show itself; but Melbourne would be particularly alive to ridicule, particularly sore to any the most trifling stigma that might be thrown upon him. Should he ever be destined to mix with men, in how many little habits of manner and thinking will he be found deficient, (from his very reclusé education) and in how many points, of no real consequence indeed, would he lie open to ridicule. He would feel that they were not essential—he would despise the minds that could fasten on such trifles; but he would be angry—he would

would be indignant—his manner would provoke further ridicule—and his increased indignation would settle into a habit of gloomy pride, and sullen reserve. His modes of thinking, of reasoning, will be different from those of the various beings he will encounter; and they will not stop to consider, what he will feel, that they are better and more accurate; the difference will, to them, be a signal for attack; and, I fear, poor Melbourne's happiness will be the sacrifice."

"I have seldom known you, Wilford, said Miss Searle, "give way to such gloomy philosophy. Really, you see these things through too despairing a medium. Melbourne does not seem born to be unhappy. With every talent, every virtue, every amiable affection, can he be doomed to be the butt and scorn of his fellow-creatures—a mark for malice to shoot at. My dear brother, let me philosophize; and if you perceive this tendency to irritability in Melbourne, rather endeavour to apply an antidote, than continue to lament its possible effects. For my part, when I see
E 2 him

him return from his day's labour in his cartter's frock, and hear him talk to you with all the enthusiasm of genius, all the solidity of judgment, I am inclined to smile at the learned labourer, not in derision, but in admiration of the incongruous association of a hempen frock, and a logical demonstration. He will never be the cartter to allow that 'his horse would draw an inference, as well as any thing you'd put him to.'

Mr. Searle smiled at his sister's arguments, and acknowledged that he had thought too deeply about it, promising to follow her advice, and endeavour to eradicate from the mind of his pupil, that false delicacy which would only endanger his happiness.

"Indeed," said Mary, "Melbourne is naturally formed for polite life. I, to be sure, have known but little of the manners of the world; yet I can see how graceful, how easy is his politeness. Always attentive, always ready, he seems as if his mind was wholly intent on performing any little offices for his companions; and yet his politeness is so dignified,

nified, that there is no fear of his manners degenerating into a fribbling effeminacy."

"It is certainly a great perfection in Melbourne's character," said Mr. Searle, that whatever he does, he does with his whole heart; he is as intent on his childish amusements, as on his studies; and yet," continued he pensively, "this amiable, this engaging warmth of heart, which will naturally lead him to enjoy, and to excel in whatever he undertakes, may, in his commerce with the world, lead him into many inconveniences."

"Croaking again," said Mary, smiling. "My dear Wilford, you are growing absolutely disagreeable. Ought not a lad of his age to be warm? Surely, if the heart is cold in early youth, nothing generous or noble can ever be expected from it; and where is the virtue, where the excellence, that in this world may not lead to some inconvenience?"

"You must allow, my dear Mary," said Mr. Searle, "for the anxiety of a man engaged in so arduous, so responsible a task, as that of forming a human creature, and particularly

cularly one possessed of such a mind as Melbourne's. Melbourne is formed to be eminently happy, or supremely wretched. His quickness, his feeling, his enthusiasm, will not suffer him to know mere placid content."

"Pardon me, my brother," said Mary, bending over the hand that grasped her's; "I feel and enter into all your amiable, all your paternal solitudes; I only hope you err in your fears, which at all times are apt to magnify objects. Melbourne seems perfectly at ease now, and surely——"

"I comprehend your inference," interrupted Mr. Searle; "but Melbourne now enjoys perfect happiness; he enters so thoroughly into every pursuit, that the warmth of his nature extracts rapture from trifles; the changes of the weather transport him, as they forward one or other of his pursuits. Is it bad weather, what a charming opportunity for study; besides, his father wishes for rain. Is it fine, it is fortunate, for to-day he will work in the fields. Is it hot,

hot; it is delicious, for he may lounge in the woods."

"And surely, my dear Wilford," replied Mary, "every instance you have mentioned proves that Melbourne is formed to be happy. A mind so capable of extracting delight from every circumstance, has surely the fairest chance."

"The same exquisite sensibility, my sister," answered Mr. Searle, "which teaches a young heart to find this transport in the most common events of life, will subject that very heart, which now has never known a pang, to the severest torments. All his prospects, all his wishes, are now within his reach; the circumstance which disappoints one pursuit, is an advantage to another; he has never yet received a serious check. It is when disappointment, when adversity, when sorrow have once taught him the lesson of tears, that he will view every contingency on both sides, and feel pain as exquisitely as he now does pleasure."

"Pray," said Miss Searle, who determined if possible to change the gloomy tenour of her brother's ideas, "do you call Melbourne handsome?"

"No," said Mr. Searle; "and yet his face will please more than an hundred beautiful ones; there is an odd irregularity in his features that exactly corresponds with his character."

"To be sure," replied Miss Searle, "his mouth is too wide, and his eyebrows too low for beauty; but I think the most regular faces are very seldom the most engaging; and there is infinite good-humour about his mouth."

"And infinite sense in his contracted eyebrow," said Mr. Searle.

"And such fun and vivacity in his eyes," added Mary.

"Oh, as far as expression of every varied kind, and the perfect index of an excellent heart can constitute beauty," replied Mr. Searle, "Melbourne is completely beautiful,

CHAP. VIII.

IN WHICH OUR HERO IS CALLED INTO
ACTION.

———"And much he gaz'd, and much he thought."

IT happened one evening, that after a day's hard labour, Melbourne was setting out for one of his long rambles over the tops of the mountains; but as he ascended that which overhung the lake, exactly opposite to John Edmonds's cottage, he was surprised by the noise of wheels in the valley. As this was an hour when most of the teams were come home and resting, he turned about to see what caused the sound; nor was his surprise lessened,

lessened, on perceiving that it proceeded from a coach drawn by four horses, attended by three men on horseback. A vehicle of this kind was quite a phænomenon at Linwood; and Melbourne ran, or rather flew, down the hill to have a nearer view of it. He felt a thousand fears lest it should be out of sight before he could reach the valley; but his joy was very great on observing the carriage stop, and, as one of the servants opened the door, a gentleman alight from it, followed by two boys and two girls; while another lad dismounted from his horse, and giving it to the servant, joined the party.

Melbourne, unused to the world, never associated the smallest idea of degradation with the carter's frock he wore; and though he did not expect to attract their notice, determined to watch this interesting group. He rejoiced when he saw both the servants remain with the carriage; the gentleman walked forward, while the five young people, who peculiarly attracted Melbourne's attention, loitered more slowly behind. He followed

lowed them at a small distance, and remarked that one of the young ladies was much taller than the other, and also more gaily dressed; he had no opportunity at present of observing their faces, but he was struck with a gracefulness in their air which was new to him;—the light airy figure of the youngest charmed him, and almost drew away his eyes from the flowing habiliments and waving feathers of the other, particularly as the fairy nymph held the hand of the youngest of the boys, and seemed to listen to his childish prattle with extreme good-humour; while the two elder boys, who were both taller and older than Melbourne, talked with the eldest young lady. A sight so novel entirely engrossed the mind of Melbourne; he loitered near enough to watch their manners, but not to catch their words. They had now followed the beautiful windings of the lake, till the swelling hill entirely concealed the carriage from their view, and the turn of the valley now brought them in front of an extensive wood, which greatly embellished the pro-

spect;—he advanced a little nearer to them under pretence of following a butterfly, and heard the eldest girl say, “I wish my father would turn about; we shall not get home before dark.”

“Dear Matilda,” replied the other, “it is so beautiful a place, I should be quite sorry to go before we had peeped into the wood.”

“That’s always your way, Julia,” said Matilda; “you don’t care how long you are rambling about; you don’t consider, child, how late it is.”

“Perhaps you are tired, Matilda,” replied the other; “and if so, I will run to my uncle, and ask him to go back.”

“No, pray let him alone,” said Matilda; “you know he don’t like to be hurried.”

Julia was now silent, but stopped almost immediately to take a stone out of the little boy’s shoe; it had hurt his foot, and the poor little fellow was crying; she sat down with him on the grass, and tried with great kindness to sooth his little sorrows, gathering him a few wild flowers to play with. While

thus employed, the two great boys approached her, and bidding little William run after his sister Matilda, they each seized one of her hands, and walked with her in a very rude manner along the edge of the lake. She seemed endeavouring to disengage herself, when suddenly both the boys, in a very boisterous manner, released her hands, and began pushing her about from one to the other.

Melbourne felt his blood beginning to boil, and keeping his eye fixed upon them, came so near them that he could hear their expressions, which were more low and vulgar than he could have expected, abusing the poor girl for her prudery, and threatening to take down her pride.

"What," said one of them, "she disdains playing with us, does she, Edmond? she is too fine a lady to romp, I warrant her; come, send her to me, I'll manage her, and be d—d to her."

Edmund then pushed her with violence to his companion, who caught her in his arms,

arms, and tried to kiss her. The poor girl resisted their rudeness as much as she could, and begged in the gentlest terms to be released; but Edmund approaching, exclaimed, "Damn her, George, I'll be crucified if you make any thing of her; she deserves a good whipping, and we'll give it her."

They seemed actually preparing to put their threats in execution, but Melbourne determined to prevent them, and was approaching to interfere, and rescue her, when George whisked her round two or three times with great celerity, and suddenly letting her go, she fell down a steep bank into the lake.

To plunge into the lake, to seize her clothes, to drag her to the bank, and to support her in his arms when he had seated her on it, was the work of a moment to Melbourne; while her two cowardly persecutors ran away, calling aloud to their father to come to them.

Melbourne, though perfectly attentive to his interesting charge, remarked with indignation

nation that the other young lady, having been briefly informed of the accident, went on with the boys to overtake the gentleman, instead of returning to assist the poor unfortunate child; and as they were out of sight of the carriage, the servants were ignorant of the accident. She was not long however before she recovered, as Melbourne had used every means to restore her senses, for she was either stunned, or she had fainted.

"My dear Julia," cried the little boy, who had flown to them, and hung about her with fondness, "I am so glad to see you open your eyes; how could you fall into that nasty pond?"

Julia answered, "I felt very giddy, William, with looking at the water; you must not run too near it." She then fixed her eyes on Melbourne's face, (who still held her in his arms) and said, hesitatingly, "I am sure I should have been drowned but for you, and you are, I fear, wet yourself; but—do not think it odd of me to say as I do, and pray, pray do not contradict me when my uncle and

and the boys come up. I do not know how to ask it, for I know I shall not speak the truth; but I dare not, indeed I dare not accuse those two boys."

Melbourne did not immediately answer, and the poor girl, in very evident distress, laid her hand on his arm, and grasping it very hard, said eagerly, "Do, pray promise not to contradict me, though I do not say all that passed; I was giddy, you know——"

"You were, indeed, made so," replied Melbourne; but how do you find yourself?"

"Oh! very well—but you don't promise. Oh! you don't know what a life I should lead if I were to tell of the boys."

"It is not right to conceal their misconduct," replied Melbourne, "but the motive you alledge will ensure my silence."

"Thank you, thank you," said Julia, smiling, and renewing her pressure of his arm; and how do you do? Oh! how much I am obliged to you (and as she spoke, the energy of her voice shewed how much she felt

felt the obligation); I hope you won't catch cold, and get ill."

"You are in far more danger than I am," said Melbourne; but I trust we shall both escape without any injury."

Julia was very young to combine circumstances; yet she wondered, as she perceived the coarse hempen sleeve under her hand, at the extreme incongruity between the dress and the manners of her companion; the moment this idea struck her, her artless mind expressed it, both in the surprise painted in her eyes, and in the following words—

"Pray who are you? for you look as if you were a labourer; but I never heard a country working man speak like you in all my life."

Melbourne, perhaps for the first time in his life, felt the force of the remark; and rising, and colouring, retreated, without speaking, a few steps behind Julia, who perceived that she had embarrassed him, and wished to recall her question; but it was past, and she knew not how to remedy the mistake.

chief

chief she had done. They therefore continued each to feel awkward, and remained silent, till the younger of the two lads approached, and said, "I suppose, Julia, you'll tell my father I foused you in on purpose; but you know if you do, you'll tell a damned lie."

"I do not suppose, George," replied Julia, "that you meant to throw me into the lake; but I am sure I do not suppose you meant to be civil to me."

"Oh, don't you," said he; "well, we shall have a fine piece of work with your supposes."

Julia cast an eye of supplication on Melbourne, whose agitation and indignation grew every moment more visible; but he obeyed her silent request, and forbore to quarrel with George. At this moment the rest of the group came up; and the gentleman, taking Julia's hand, tenderly enquired how she found herself, and hearing she was much recovered, he turned towards Melbourne, and thanked him heartily for having saved his little girl. "You are a good lad, I doubt not."

not," said the gentleman; "what's your name, and where do you live?"

Melbourne replied very laconically, and the gentleman offered him money, which he declined, and said within himself, "they are paying the carter's frock for a mere act of humanity." It was the first time poor Melbourne had ever associated the idea of his frock with that of disgrace. The elder girl was meanwhile enquiring of Julia how she came to be so abominably awkward as to fall into the lake.

"I was very giddy, Miss Macartney," replied Julia, (to whose words and manners Melbourne paid the most unremitting attention.)

"You are always giddy, I think," said she; "but I suppose you were going too near the edge. I am sure I was in a horrid fright all the time you had got hold of William; for I expected every moment to see you both fall in together; you are such a careless girl."—

"Come,

"Come, come, Matilda," said the gentleman, "it is not fair to chide Julia now. She always seems too fond of William not to take very good care of him."

"That she does, papa," cried William, "more care than Matilda does, by half."

"Hold your tongue, child," said Matilda; and then turning to Julia, she added, "Are you well enough now, Miss Dalrymple, to walk to the carriage?"

"I am perfectly recovered," said Julia, rising.

"This accident has put an end to our walk," said Miss Macartney; "for I suppose, Sir, you will go back again now."

"I think we had better," said Mr. Macartney. "Come, Julia, take hold of my arm."

As Mr. Macartney and the young ladies walked forward, Miss Macartney leading little William, George and Edmund lingered behind, and George said with a sneer to Melbourne, "I suppose you did not know the worth of what my father offered you; you

you never saw such a thing before, did you, man? why it was a guinea, and would go for one and twenty shillings, and every shilling is worth eight and forty farthings; for I suppose that is the coin you are best acquainted with."

"Take care, Mr. George, replied Melbourne, "or I shall pay you in a coin you little expect."

"Oh, Oh! you threaten, do you?" said George; "you think you have done a mighty feat in dragging a good-for-nothing little girl out of your great pond here."

"I fancy," said Melbourne, "if I were to throw you in, I should do as good a deed."

"You are a pretty bragger," retorted Edmund; "I dare say you dare not strip and fight me."

"No, he'd be a fool if he would," said George; for you are a stouter fellow than he is, and the best bruiser I know."

"I can tell you, gentlemen," said Melbourne, "(for I suppose you call yourselves gentlemen) that I do not value either of you.

You

You can have no true courage, or you would not have insulted and ill-treated a young lady as you did the young lady."

"I shall wish Miss Julia joy of her champion," said George; I suppose you mean to infer that we tossed her purposely into the lake."

"Why, really," replied Melbourne, "I do not give you credit for courage enough to do so bold a deed, though it was by your fault she fell in; you were, however, confoundedly frightened, and never staid to help her out."

"Why do we stand talking to this plough-boy any longer?" said George; we shall make my father wait."

"No, no," said Edmund; "I told my father we would walk home. I have a mind to try a fall with this champion."

"But he has no mind to fight with you," said George; "and I commend his caution."

Melbourne's eager soul caught fire at this, and he instantly prepared for battle; while Edmund, stripping off his coat, doubled his fists

lifts at his opponent, who in a very few minutes gave him as much as he wished for; and then turning to George, "Now, Sir," said he, "I am ready for you."

"I shan't fight," said George.

"Then I will thrash you," said Melbourne; "for you it was who threw Miss Julia into the water; and if you refuse to fight fairly, I will beat you soundly."

George endeavoured to summon courage enough to fight so desperate an enemy, but found himself more inclined to desert, and accordingly took to his heels, but was presently overtaken by Melbourne; who, when he had caught him, gave him a sufficient drubbing, which George received with the most passive forbearance, and in the midst of which Mr. Macartney appeared, having sent the girls and William in the coach to their inn, and determined to extend his own walk in so novel and romantic a scene. Mr. Macartney was a good deal surprised to see Melbourne thrashing his second son with so much good-will, and to perceive Edmund, at no

great distance, extended on the field of battle. With a loud voice, he demanded to know the meaning of what he saw.

"Why, Sir," said Edmund, "that insolent boy would pick a quarrel with us, and then boasted that he could beat us both at once, and that if we would not fight, he would throw us into the lake. In short, Sir, there was no supporting his impertinence, and so we fought him."

"And were beaten it seems," replied Mr. Macartney; "I am sorry, my lad," continued he, turning to Melbourne, "that by this unprovoked quarrel with my sons, you should have cancelled the very great service you have done me. I meant to have visited your abode, and endeavoured to be your friend; but as things have now ended, I must tell you that I never assist quarrelsome persons, and that therefore I shall take no further notice of you."

"Your notice, Sir," replied Melbourne, "I should have been proud to obtain in consequence of any real merit; and excuse me if I say,

I say the loss of it does not give me any great concern, as my heart does not reproach me for my conduct." And with these words Melbourne, who was restrained by Julia's petition from disclosing the whole truth, and who indeed was above exculpating himself by criminating another, walked away with dignity towards a little wood which skirted the bottom of the hill. Mr. Macartney exclaimed, "A very odd young man—very haughty for a mere labourer! yet he speaks well—very singular; I should like to see a little more of him." He then called after him by name; but Melbourne, who felt all the difficulty of his situation, turned round, and touching his hat with a dignified respect, ran into the wood, and was out of sight in a moment.

"Melbourne, in his whole life, had never yet been so called into action; and when he was now safe from observation, he walked slowly along, and reflected on his conduct; but feeling bewildered in his ideas, he determined to go to the parsonage, and give a full

account of the whole wonderful adventure to his excellent friend Mr. Searle. He therefore struck into a cross path, which led directly to the opposite side of the lake, round its farthest end, and brought him out of the wood within an hundred yards of the well-known wicket. When he entered, he found the worthy pastor and his amiable sister at tea, and as he opened the door, Miss Searle welcomed him with a cordial smile, but instantly exclaimed, "My dear Melbourne, what has happened? you are all agitation!"

"I have met with a great adventure," replied Melbourne, "and am come hither to relate it to you and Mr. Searle."

"Take a chair then," said Miss Searle, and drink this dish of tea before you begin, to quiet you, though I am impatient to hear."

Melbourne gratefully received Miss Searle's attention; and when he had related every circumstance with the most perfect accuracy, enquired of Mr. Searle whether he had done wrong."

"Do

"Do you feel as if you had?" asked Mr. Searle.

"Why, Sir," replied Melbourne, "I do not know whether I ought to have answered Mr. Macartney so decidedly as I did, and whether, when he called me back, I ought not to have gone. I fear I was influenced by pride in that part of my conduct."

"Perhaps you were," said Mr. Searle; "yet I am not inclined to blame it severely; you had been treated with great opprobrium."

"My dear Sir," said Melbourne, with grateful warmth, "you feel for me as you know me, the pupil whom you have instructed in the dignity of human nature; but the Macartneys knew no more of me than my appearance; and the prejudices of the world afford them a very sufficient excuse, since they looked on me as a mere uncultivated plough-boy, and must have been more struck with my insolence than with any thing else about me."

"You certainly furnish them with a very plausible excuse, Melbourne," replied Mr. Searle; but however this adventure will probably end here, as these people are most likely travellers, attracted by the beauty of Liffwood, to alight and examine it a little; they will be gone to-morrow, and we shall hear of them no more."

"And Mr. Macartney will continue to think ill of me, and Miss Dalrymple will be prejudiced against me," said Melbourne, sighing; "however, if you, Sir, and my own heart acquit me, I certainly ought not to be dejected on this account."

"Miss Dalrymple will be very ungrateful," said Miss Searle with quickness, "if she ever suffers herself to be prejudiced against you. Young as she is, she has shewn herself capable of understanding the sacrifice you made to her delicacy; and when she finds how you have been rewarded for your services to her, she will be doubly penetrated with gratitude."

" You give me there a very flattering assurance," said Melbourne; " but I believe I am hardly aware how late it is; I shall keep up my good mother. Good night to you, my dear Miss Searle; good night to you, Sir."

" Good night, my excellent lad," said Mr. Searle—

" —My worthy knight-errant," added Miss Searle; and Melbourne departed.

CHAP. IX.

A DESULTORY CONVERSATION.

“ Thoughts disentangle passing o’er the lip.”

YOUNG.

SCARCELY had Melbourne shut the door of the parsonage, ere Miss Searle began very warmly to commend the part he had acted in the affair; and Mr. Searle remarked that he had displayed those very qualities which he himself had pointed out in his character the last time they had conversed on the subject. “ His whole manner,” said Mr. Searle, “ shews that in this momentary connection with these lads, he has felt his own superiority; he confesses the dominion
of

of pride in his conduct towards their father; he could not withstand the challenge to fight, peaceable as he naturally is, when they ridiculed him for cowardice; and now that all is over, probably for ever, he dwells with much disquiet on the consequences which he imagines will take place in the minds of the gentleman and the little girl."

"Why surely, Wilford," said Miss Searle, "you do not mean to blame the boy?"

"No," replied Mr. Searle, "he has not deserved to be blamed; and were he really a lad of birth and fortune, I should not object to those indications of high spirit and ardent feeling; but born, as Melbourne is, to uncertain and precarious subsistence, they will retard his progress, subject him to many inconveniences, and make him many enemies, though he will deserve to meet only with friends. Do you not imagine, for instance, that these two lads, were they ever to meet with him in future, would bear him a perpetual animosity? What gentleman in
his

his own opinion (as Melbourne justly enough called these Macartneys) will submit to be taught his duty by one whom he regards as so much his inferior?"

"We cannot tell," replied Miss Searle, "what station of life our Melbourne is destined for. We only know that he is worthy of the most distinguished."

"You are not still romantic enough," said Mr. Searle, "to expect that his parents will ever come here to claim him? My dear Mary, it is time to abandon such chimeras."

"Nay, Wilford," replied Miss Searle, "they may not, and most probably will not, come here to claim him; yet they may meet with him on the great stage of the world, and may proudly acknowledge their long-neglected offspring; or his merit, his talents, may of themselves raise him to the high situation they so well deserve."

"My dear sanguine sister," said Mr. Searle smiling, "what a pretty romance have you formed in your own imagination!"

"Why

“Why surely, Wilford,” resumed Miss Searle, “you do not imagine that a lad who discovers so ardent a soul, will remain quietly buried at Linwood, and conceal his powers in rural obscurity?”

“I fear he will not,” said Mr. Searle, sighing; “and yet to that I should be pleased to bend his wishes. We have felt, my Mary, that happiness is to be found in rural obscurity, and that we miss not the gaudy attractions, nor want the gay amusements of the world to enliven us, while quietly buried at Linwood.”

“We have felt all this, my brother,” said Mary, in a softened voice, and shall feel it to the end of our lives; but perhaps we were born with less aspiring dispositions than Melbourne already discovers, and we have also the advantage of a mutual and equal friendship; for I flatter myself my Wilford would have found Linwood dull had he lived alone, and I should have found it wretched with farmer Osborne. Let me ask you, my dear

brother, why you should object to Melbourne's seeking more distinguished employment than Linwood affords?"

Mr. Searle had quitted his seat while his sister had been speaking; he now drew near her, resumed his chair, took both her hands, pressed them with the warmest affection, and replied, "It can only be with a view to his own welfare, that I should wish him to prefer the quiet abode of Linwood. Yet as probably his active mind will lead him beyond so confined a sphere, I must henceforward endeavour to prepare him for that world he will resolve to enter. I tremble lest he should be too fastidious both in his choice of a pursuit, and in the means of pursuing it."

"You once talked, I remember," said Mary, "of presenting him to your friend Spencer Montague; but that idea seems dropped."

"Many things concur to induce me to give it up," replied Mr. Searle. "I have not now heard from Spencer for many years; I have

“ But, my dear brother, it is yet time enough to settle this business ; the chapter of accidents may raise up circumstances in favour of your pupil, and without your intervention. There is yet another thing to be considered—Is he to go to college ? ”

F 6

justly, there is yet time enough before us ;—Melbourne is but fifteen, but the circumstances which have occasioned this conversation, make him appear much older, and I was considering these things as pressing upon us."

"How naturally we fall into long conversations respecting this poor lad!" observed Miss Searle.

"True," replied he; "it proves, at least, that we have his interest very much at heart."

"Oh! his parents," cried Mary, "know not what a jewel they neglect; and yet, poor people, they may be very much to be pitied. If they are unable, from poverty or any other cause, to claim their child, their hearts may be torn by ten thousand pangs, for they must be ignorant even whether he exists! and his worth, his virtues, his talents, they cannot know."

"They may, indeed, my sister," answered Mr. Searle, "be anxious to learn some particulars respecting this interesting lad; but there are people who could, without remorse, throw

throw such a treasure from them. A young woman of fashion, for instance, might think it justifiable to abandon the child whose birth would cover her with infamy; the fear of shame would stifle the maternal sentiments in her bosom, and the young libertine, her seducer, would gladly be emancipated from the expence of rearing his offspring, and from all further connection with the pledge of an amour he would wish to forget."

"Can such wretches exist!" exclaimed Miss Searle; "the second error is worse than the first. A mind like Melbourne's could not be the offspring of hearts capable of such depravity."

Mr. Searle smiled, but his sister continued, "Had it been my dreadful lot to be exposed to the terrible alternative of infamy or of abandoning my child, I am sure I should have braved the censure of the world."

"Perhaps, my dear Mary," replied Mr. Searle, "you can hardly judge of the strength of those prejudices in more distinguished life. A young woman, in such a case,

case, sacrifices not only her own, but the fair fame of all her family; renders her sisters suspected, her brothers contemned, and dishonours the age of her parents; and for a fair creature, ever before approached with trembling respect, to become, as Othello says,

• A fixed figure for the hand of scorn

• To point his slow and moving finger at,

is a heart-breaking consideration; and it is hardly to be wondered at if such a combination of reasons do overpower, in the mind of a weak being, brought up to respect the voice of the world, the voice of nature, which would lead to infamy."

"These considerations ought to prevent the first error," said Miss Searle, "which, however, I cannot help thinking less criminal than the second; to abandon a helpless babe, who must be the outcast of all the world except its parents, to doom—but there is no occasion to point out all the dark minutiae of the picture. We cannot mend the world;

—we

—we can only rejoice that we have adopted and cherished Melbourne.”

“ True, my Mary,” said Mr. Searle, “ and I hope the care and instructions he has received from us, will be a lasting benefit to him.”

“ It cannot be otherwise,” answered Mary; “ a mind like his must have taken some strong bias, and a good education was necessary to direct it aright; left to the workings of nature, Melbourne would not have been less active, but he would have judged less justly.”

“ The subject would carry us on for ever,” said Mr. Searle; “ and we forget that it was late when Melbourne quitted us.”

They parted for the night, and sweet repose shed its happiest influence over the pillow of the worthy minister, and his benevolent and beloved sister.

CHAP. X.

A SINGULAR OFFER.

THE following morning, Melbourne flew early to the parsonage house, for the day was allotted to study; but Mr. Searle had received a summons to a distant village, and Melbourne readily agreed to give his father another day's work. He accordingly joined Edmonds in the fields; and when they returned in the middle of the day to their homely meal, Melbourne thought he perceived at a distance Mr. Macartney and Miss Dalrymple. He was not mistaken, for Mrs. Edmonds told him a gentleman and a pretty Miss had been there enquiring for him, and she had directed them to the parsonage, not expecting

expecting that he was at work in the fields. Melbourne thought civility and respect should induce him to overtake them, as they were in search of him; and accordingly, with a swift pace, followed, and presently joined them. He made a respectful bow to Mr. Macartney, and turning to Julia, hoped she felt no ill effects from her accident."

Mr. Macartney answered for her, that she was quite well, and then said, "We were coming in search of you, young man; I want to have some conversation with you. Shall we return to the cottage, or proceed to the parsonage?"

"As you please, Sir," said Melbourne.

"Then we will return to the cottage," said Mr. Macartney; "your name is Melbourne, I think?"

"It is, Sir."

"You are not then the son of the woman I saw, for her name is Edmonds?"

"I never knew another mother," said Melbourne, sighing.

"And

“ And she tells me that the parson of this village has been your friend, and given you some learning.”

“ He has, indeed, been my friend,” said Melbourne, with dignity.

“ He has given you pride, I see, young man,” replied Mr. Macartney.

“ My dear Sir!” said Julia, in a voice of petition.

“ Well, my love,” said Mr. Macartney, kindly, “ I will say no more till I have heard your history. Mr. Melbourne, this child thinks you have been ill used; but she will tell me nothing, she says, but in your presence. I must own I thought it very wrong in you, and proved an insufferable degree of low-bred pride and vanity, to pick a quarrel with my sons, because you had saved Julia; but Julia is persuaded you were not so much in the wrong, and has drawn me hither to hear your justification.”

“ I have none to offer, Sir,” replied Melbourne. “ I was fortunate enough to render Miss Julia a small service; and I was unfortunate

fortunate enough to fight with your sons; these are the simple facts, and I have no more to say. I do not wish to be suspected of low-bred pride, or of a quarrelsome disposition."

"Sir," said Julia, "you promised you would let me tell you all."

"Do so, child," said Mr. Macartney.

"Well then, Sir, Edmund and George had both been out of humour with me all day for some little nonsense in the morning, and when I stopped behind Miss Matilda to take a stone out of William's shoe, they both came, and determined to tease me. I am sure Mr. Melbourne saw how rudely they pulled me about, and at last George whisked me round and round till I was quite giddy, and letting me go suddenly, I fell into the water. However, I knew I should have a sad life of it if I carried tales to you, Sir; so when this young man had got me out of the water, and I began to come to myself again, I begged of him to say nothing of what had tumbled me in; for I saw he was very angry with my cousins by what he said."

And

"And they deserved his anger," interrupted Mr. Macartney; "but go on, Julia; what did this young man say?"

"He called them mean-spirited and unmanly."

"I ought not, Sir," said Melbourne, "to have called them so; but I could not help thinking their conduct wrong, and I own I was in a passion."

"So," resumed Julia, "when George came to me, he tried to frighten me into silence; but I had determined before not to tell, so I said nothing, but begged Melbourne not to quarrel, for he looked very much provoked at George's rude manner; and so, Sir, then you came up, and Mills Macartney—and we went home; and when you came back and said, Melbourne was a quarrelsome good-for-nothing lad, and had beat both George and Edmund, and had only pulled me out of the water to be taken notice of, for refusing any reward, I thought it was very ungrateful and very unjust in me to let you think so, when I dare say he had no such reason

reason for saving me; and I am afraid my
cousins behaved ill to him, to provoke him
to fight.

"I'll be bound they did," interrupted
Mrs. Edmonds, "for it's no little matter
will provoke him to wrath; he's as gentle as
a lamb, and the peace-maker of the whole
village. What did them boys say to you,
Harry? tell us all; I know you'll speak the
truth."

"Melbourne," said Mr. Macartney, with
a frank air, "I fear I have wronged you in
my opinion. My little Julia here is a good
and generous girl, and has judged very well.
Tell me, without reserve, how my sons con-
ducted themselves to produce your quarrel;
were they or you the aggressors?"

"I had certainly no wish to fight them,"
replied Melbourne; "but it is unnecessary to
say any thing further on the subject; you are
now disposed to think ill of me (thanks
to Miss Julia's generosity), and that gratifies
my utmost wishes."

You

"You are a noble fellow, and your parson here has well cultivated both your heart and your talents. I should like nothing better than to put my boys under his care. Pray what learning, properly so called, has he given you? Are you forward in Latin?"

"I can read and understand any Latin book, Sir," said Melbourne.

"Have you begun Greek?"

"I have."

"And how old are you?"

"I believe I am near sixteen, Sir."

"No, no," cried Mrs. Edmonds, "not much past fifteen!"

"And you have never been at school? Pray are you to go to college?"

"I never heard of it," replied Melbourne.

"Well, Mr. Melbourne," said Mr. Macartney, "I think I have seen enough of you to be convinced you are a very extraordinary young man, and I should suppose your abilities very good; I love Julia as well as if she were my own child, and I am not ungrateful for the service you have done her. You have
also

also done my sons an essential service ; for you have given me a knowledge of their dispositions, which I shall now endeavour to correct. I am going to spend a fortnight at some distance from hence, and shall return this way. Think of what I am now going to say ; consult your parson upon it ; and, when I return, let me know your determination. I will take you back with me ; give you a couple of years at Eton ; and then either send you to college, purchase a pair of colours for you, or equip you for the navy, whichever line you prefer. Your parson will know more of the matter than you ; therefore, say not a word now. Good by, I wish you well most heartily. Julia, bid your preserver farewell."

Melbourne remained silent; he gazed in Mr. Macartney's face, and his eloquent eyes spoke his feelings ;—he took Julia's hand, and bowing on it, kissed it, as she said, " Good by, Mr. Melbourne ;" and when they quitted the cottage, he stood as one thunderstruck, gazing

gazing after them, and insensible to Mrs. Edmonds's clamorous congratulations.

That Mr. Macartney, merely influenced by Melbourne's appearance, should so suddenly make him so liberal an offer, can only be imputed to the natural tendency of the human heart, where swayed by principles of goodness, to make too liberal an atonement for an offence committed. Mr. Macartney's heart was warm, and easily biased. He loved the little Julia with a partial fondness; and had, with unexpected readiness, acquiesced in her enthusiastic ideas of the injury done to her preserver. He forgot not, however, to give to Melbourne such documents as might prove to Mr. Searle that he was capable of fulfilling the offer he had made.

CHAP. XI.

A DEBATE.

THE singular generosity of Mr. Macartney, as recorded in the last chapter, threw the brains of poor Melbourne into violent agitation. His ideas were absolutely in a whirl; and as he stood ruminating, he uttered several desultory exclamations, which would have induced a bystander to suppose him mad.—“His manner at first did not lead me to expect this!”—“What a providential accident was Julia’s!”—“What will Mr. Searle say? I wish he was at home;”—and a thousand such incoherent expressions, which made Mrs. Edmonds a little impatient—for she had already formed a romance in her own

mind, and settled that Melbourne would turn out son to Mr. Macartney, and in time would marry Miss Julia; but she was not quite contented with a plain Mr. for his father, and still hoped that a greater personage would claim him for his offspring; and in spite of Mr. Searle's prohibition, she was going to fill Melbourne's head with all her conjectures, and perhaps inspire him for life with romantic hopes never to be realized, had not he discovered Mr. Searle at a distance, which was a magnet not to be resisted.

"There he is!" exclaimed Melbourne, as he snatched his hat.

"Why, you arn't going without your dinner, Harry?" cried Mrs. Edmonds.

"Oh! mother," replied he, "I cannot eat; I shall dine with Mr. Searle."

"Poh, poh, child, he'll have dined; do stay and eat a bit; I want to talk to you."

"I will be home again early, mother," said he, "and listen to all you have to say; but now indeed you must excuse me;" and without waiting for her answer, flew towards the

the parsonage, and reached it just as Mr. Searle opened the door. They entered together, and Mr. Searle exclaimed, "What means this breathless agitation, Melbourne?"

"Oh! Sir, such a consequence of last night's adventure!—Oh Miss Searle!"

"What's the matter," said Miss Searle; "has the little girl got a fever? or are the boys hurt?"

"No, no," replied Melbourne, "nothing bad. Oh, my dear Sir—Mr. Macartney has offered——"

"What has he offered," said Mr. Searle, finding Melbourne did not proceed.

"I am both pleased and grieved," continued Melbourne; "but you will decide for me.—He has offered to take me back with him in a fortnight, put me to Eton for two years, and then either send me to college, put me in the navy, or buy me a pair of colours, whichever I prefer; and desired me to give you this direction to his house."

"Why, how is this, Melbourne?" said

Mr. Searle ; " I thought he did not seem best pleased with you last night."

" No, Sir," replied Melbourne ; " but little Julia, who is an angel, brought him to our cottage this morning, and before me, told him how ill her cousins had behaved to her ; and Mr. Macartney talked to me a good deal, and at last he made me this offer, told me to consult you, and when he returned, which would be in a fortnight, to have made my decision whether I would go with him, or remain here."

" And you have already decided, I dare say," said Mr. Searle.

" Indeed, Sir," replied Melbourne, " I am further from a decision than before I saw you. The first prospect of Eton, the University, and the various circumstances that might follow, dazzled me ; but I now feel that I should be separated from you, and thrown among strangers, who not only would not love me, but would despise me ; and I think if Mr. Macartney would allow me to dictate to his generosity, I would rather he
would

would make my father and mother easy in the world, and let me find my way as I can."

"The advantages which Eton school for two years, and College afterwards, would afford you, my dear boy," said Mr. Searle, "are too real to be lightly given up. There will be both conveniences and inconveniences in accepting Mr. Macartney's offer, even should he remain in the same mind a fortnight hence, when he returns."

"Can there be any doubt of it, Sir?" said Melbourne, with a look of enquiry.

"It would hardly be just in me," replied Mr. Searle, "to form a judgment of a person I have not seen, and who has displayed such feeling and generosity; but in thinking it possible that Mr. Macartney may have changed his mind, I only go on general principles, for many men can feel very generous on a first impression, and suffer it all to evaporate. Besides, by what you have said, I should imagine Mr. Macartney was of a disposition to be easily led away. In his sudden change this morning, he was influenced

by the little girl's representation, and by your conversation, though he could know nothing of your real merit."

"And you will not have friends near him," said Miss Searle, "in those two rude boys, nor in Miss Macartney. I think poor little Julia will be your only supporter. No, no, I dare say Mr. Macartney will have either forgotten you, or abandoned his plan before a fortnight is over."

"Poor Melbourne, whose active mind, elated with hope, had already raised a fine edifice of future distinction on the foundation of Mr. Macartney's offers, felt his air-built castles sink at once; a tear rose in his eye, but he dashed away the mark of disappointment, and said to Mr. Searle, "Then, Sir, we will proceed as usual, and think no more of Mr. Macartney."

"Not so," said Mr. Searle; "that is deciding with the impetuosity of youth. We will think of his offers, we will chuse, but we will learn to bear the demolition of our hopes, should he have altered his intention."

"And

"And what do you think of his offers, Sir?" asked Melbourne.

"His offers, my dear boy," replied Mr. Searle, "are certainly not to be lightly rejected. At Eton, at College, you would find various opportunities of cultivating the knowledge of which you now possess the first rudiments; and to have you placed in those very situations, has long been the darling wish of my heart. You are now of an age to reap all the benefit of a public school; and I hope your principles are too well grounded to suffer you to be led astray by example. The habits of Eton would be particularly calculated to amend the chief defects in your disposition—an irritability of temper, a foreboding to ridicule, and a degree of pride, very natural to young people who have been brought up alone.—

(Melbourne coloured, and was going to speak; but seeing Mr. Searle about to proceed, he checked himself.)

—"In two years to be placed at College, which I apprehend you would prefer to the

army or the navy, would be another invaluable advantage. You might there chuse your favourite mistress among the sciences, and meet with every encouragement and assistance. You would be enabled to give to your talents the highest degree of cultivation possible;—and then, my dear Melbourne, you must act for yourself. In the professions for which the University would prepare you, the Law, the Church, or Medicine, the progress is very slow, and the success very uncertain. To be sure, the sea and the sword are still open to you, and a classical education would be no incumbrance.”

“ Oh! Sir,” said Melbourne, “ animated by the energy of youth, for my future progress in life, should I have those advantages, I can have no fears. Some line or other must enable me to exert myself.”

“ Well,” said Mr. Searle, “ these are the real advantages of Mr. Macartney’s offer, which must undoubtedly be purchased by submitting to many inconveniences. Certainly, as my sister observed, you will never find

find friends in Miss Macartney or her two brothers; and as the boys will probably be your companions at Eton, they will have opportunities enough of exercising most ingenious malice;—they will hourly make you feel your obligations to their father, and they will inform every boy in the school of your dependant situation; the same opportunities, and probably the same conduct, will continue at College, and, what is as much to be feared, they will perhaps be able to prejudice Mr. Macartney against you. This is giving them credit for a great deal of malice, but it is right to look for every possible inconvenience.”

“ True, Sir,” said Melbourne; “ but these, except indeed the injury they might do me with their father, are not sufficient evils to counterbalance the solid advantages you displayed before. There must be means of silencing such malicious impertinence, and of acquiring a degree of respect from the other boys at Eton; and at College their in-

fluence would be less extens^ve — I should there associate with men.” •

“ You would so,” replied Mr. Searle; and it is possible you might manage these matters well enough; but let us look forward to futurity—what are you to do when you have left College?”

“ What shall I do, my dear Sir,” asked Melbourne, “ when I become a man, if I continue here? Shall I go on now and then working with Edmonds, and loitering in the woods? Shall the instruction you have given me be thrown away on such inadequate employments? When I have been through College, I shall be, with respect to pecuniary advantages, as I am now; but I shall have more friends, and more knowledge of the world I am to act in.”

“ Suffer me,” said Miss Searle, “ to point out what appears to me the greatest argument against accepting Mr. Macartney’s offers. We are not well enough acquainted with Mr. Macartney to accept so great an obligation from him: he may abide by his word;—

word; he may be a man of integrity, but he may want that generosity of soul which is necessary to render an obligation a favour; or he may be a profuse, unthinking man of the world, incapable of discernment, and of attachment."

"And is it my candid sister who points out such an objection?" said Mr. Searle. "I thought she would have judged more favourably of a person whose offers at least are generous. I expected she would have violently opposed me, for I was going to raise the very same objection."

"Mary coloured and smiled, and Melbourne said, "Indeed, Sir, I cannot feel disposed to think Mr. Macartney an indifferent man; he appears to have a warm and generous heart. However, I have been hitherto most singularly fortunate, having received the most solid obligations, and never having been suffered to feel them a burden, but the strongest bond of union and affection. All benefactors will not resemble Mr. Searle and his sister."

Mr. Searle and his sister were pleased and affected with the warm gratitude and elegant manner of Melbourne ; and Miss Searle said, " At any rate, Melbourne, should Mr. Martney hold in the same mind, you can accept his offers ; and if you find the inconveniences outweigh the advantages, you can return here to the bosom of friendship. Linwood will be always open to you ; and if, on the contrary, you remain in the world, may you never forget, and never regret its humbler happiness ! "

" You may be certain," replied Melbourne, " I never could forget it—that I shall not regret it, is less certain ; but when once entered on that career, it will be impossible to return."

" True, my dear boy," said Mr. Searle ; " and I am glad to find you see the propriety of firmness. Whenever two roads present themselves to you, chuse with caution, but then be decided.—Nothing so effectually lessens a man's character, destroys his energy, and weakens his dignity, as irresolution. I
knew

knew once a youth of extraordinary talents, who had this unfortunate failing. He had friends who bore with his caprices with zeal and patience—who indulged him with changing from the army to the navy, from the navy to the law, and from the law to the Church; but even then my poor friend could not be settled, and secretly abandoned his living, stripped off his gown, changed his name, and is now a paltry shopkeeper in an obscure country town, where he amuses his leisure hours by composing the most exquisite poetry, and is convinced that had he at first courted the Muses, he should have avoided the indecision which has been his bane, and should perhaps have reached the summit of Parnassus; and so, perhaps, he would, but probably he would have found it a barren and unprofitable soil."

"Poor man!" said Miss Searle; "he was uncommonly agreeable; I remember seeing him once—he was then in the army."

"And a red coat and a cockade, Mary, added to his natural pleasing qualities;—but

he was a charming fellow—now he is totally abandoned. Indeed, the desertion of the Church is an indelible blot on a man's character; but I do not think, Melbourne, you are likely to fall a prey to this irresolute temper."

"I should have a pretty certain resource against it," replied Melbourne; "for whenever a case of difficulty occurred, I should apply to you, my dear Sir, for advice, and should never be inclined to deviate from it, being convinced you know me and my true interests, better than I do myself."

CHAP. XII.

THE DECISION.

IN debates and conversations on the subject uppermost in their minds, Mr. Searle, his sister, and Melbourne, passed the chief part of their time, and were not quite decided as to the properest course to be pursued, though the term appointed for Mr. Macartney's absence was nearly expired, and they were every day expecting to hear something from him. Mr. Searle had indeed made enquiries respecting the future patron of his pupil, and found he was a gentleman of good fortune and unblemished character; and therefore on that head no reasonable objection could arise.

Above

Above a fortnight had now elapsed, and every day took something from their expectations of any further consequences from his offer. That he had forgotten or changed his intention, was the conclusion at the close of every evening; and the seriousness with which Melbourne assented to this conclusion, sufficiently betrayed to Mr. Searle that he had entertained a wish to profit by Mr. Macartney's offer; though he constantly expressed his consciousness of the superior happiness he should enjoy at Linwood. And, indeed, great and sincere as was the affection Harry Melbourne entertained for his friendly tutor, it was not unnatural that he should have been pleased with a plan which opened to him a view of more extensive improvement. In all their conversations, Mr. Searle had always expatiated on the advantages of a free and extensive commerce with the world, in order to enable a man to turn his talents to advantage, and even to improve them to the highest perfection of which they were capable. He had dwelt on the superior benefits of a
public

public education, to the most enlarged and classical plan possible to be adopted in a private one; and these maxims of his tutor, joined to the love, natural at his age, for variety and playful society, contributed to make a removal to Eton school, and afterwards to College, appear a most desirable object. Indeed, undecided as his resolution had been while he thought it still rested in his choice, no sooner did he think the option refused him, than all the advantages of the plan to be given up, appeared in a much stronger light; the objections to it, which before had so much weight, seemed trivial and childish, and most easily to be surmounted; and the benefits so solid and so permanent, that he wondered he could ever have hesitated.

These, however, were only Melbourne's private reflections; he endeavoured to conceal from Mr. Searle the greatest part of the chagrin he felt; yet that gentleman saw enough to make him wish a circumstance had never occurred so to disturb the tranquil and contented disposition of his pupil. In order

order, however, to render his disappointment the lighter, Mr. Searle made Harry his constant companion, indulged him in long walks with him, during which the conversation roved over a thousand interesting subjects; and Melbourne's attachment to his friend daily, if possible, increased.

At night, however, returned to John Edmonds's cottage, and thrown on his flock bed, his thoughts naturally recurred to the variety, the vanity, and the luxuries, as well as to the improvements he had lost; and every succeeding hour found him more and more restless, looking forward with something like despair to a life of inactivity and obscurity at Linwood. In the morning he rose from his restless couch, and scarcely felt enlivened by the rising sun. He wandered forth over the dewy mountains;—the gale breathed soft—the sky-lark warbled delightful—not a cloud diversified ether—and all nature was smiling and tranquil. The pure, the simple heart of Melbourne, ever in unison with joy and contentment, recovered gradually from its uneasiness,

casiness, and took its usual bent; he had wandered long and happily, and as he returned to the cottage, he was met by a messenger, who gave him a letter, the first he had ever received. He could scarcely believe his eyes; yet the address was plain enough—"To Mr. Melbourne, at Linwood." He examined it with curious eagerness, yet felt too much agitated to break the seal. He immediately had recourse to his usual resource in all difficulties, and with all the celerity of youth and impatience, flew with it to the parsonage. "See, Sir," exclaimed Melbourne, as he entered, "see, Miss Searle—a letter, and for me!"

"A letter, Melbourne?" said Mr. Searle, "and you have not yet opened it! You are very incurious for a young man of fifteen."

"I am not incurious, Sir," said Melbourne; "but I do not know how it is, I can't open the letter; pray, Sir, do you open it."

Mr. Searle took the letter, and examining it, said, "'Tis from a lady, Mr. Melbourne, I assure

I assure you; do you not wish to recal it? Can you trust me with a lady's letter?"

"Oh! yes, Sir," exclaimed Melbourne; "pray open it—I am all impatience."

Mr. Searle broke the seal, or rather, in compliance with Melbourne's request, cut it carefully round, as the impression was a very pretty one of Hope, with the motto, "*Au Ciel*;" and when the letter was unfolded, would have given it to his pupil to read, but was desired to perform that part also. Mr. Searle then, with some discomposure of countenance, read as follows:—

"It is very odd, Mr. Melbourne, that the first letter I ever wrote secretly should be to you; but I cannot help letting you know that my uncle intends sending George to Linwood to bring you to us. Now, as you know George is not very well-behaved, I was afraid he would not tell you how very much my uncle really wishes you should come with him, and go to Eton; and indeed, if he was well enough, he would have gone for you himself.

himself. Now, indeed, Mr. Melbourne, I could not bear that you should think us all as rude and ungrateful as George, and so I thought I would venture to write a line to persuade you not to mind his ill manners, but to accompany him hither. I am sure I cannot do too much to prove to you that I shall never forget the generosity with which you saved the life of

“ JULIA DALRYMPLE.”

“ Upon my word,” said Mr. Searle, “ a very pretty epistle; I commend the young lady’s spirit.”

“ Indeed, brother,” said Miss Searle, “ I think there is much to commend. Interested for the welfare of her preserver, and fearful lest he should be induced to decline so advantageous an offer, she cannot help preparing him for the ill manners of the intended messenger.”

“ Well, Harry,” said Mr. Searle, “ now it is come to the crisis—will you accept this offer or not? I see here in a postscript, that
the

the young man is to be at Linwood about one o'clock."

Once more left to his own discretion, Harry's doubts and perplexities returned. He looked first at Mr. Searle, and then at Miss Searle, and felt uneasy and bewildered; and after remaining silent for some moments, exclaimed, "Indeed, my dear Sir, I cannot chuse for myself. You know better than I do what is good for me; for I feel this moment as if it were signing my death-warrant to decide on my departure from Linwood. By your opinion I will abide."

"Indeed, my dear Melbourne," said Mr. Searle, "sorry as I shall be to lose you, I must vote for your accepting the offers of Mr. Macartney; they are fraught with too solid advantages to suffer our mutual affection to counterbalance them."

"I much doubt," replied Melbourne, with a sigh, "whether I shall ever obtain, from any circumstance whatever, any advantage equal to your affection."

"But

"But you are not going to relinquish it, Melbourne," said Mr. Searle.

"God forbid!" replied Melbourne; "I trust, I shall never deserve to lose that first of blessings; but I shall relinquish the constant happiness of witnessing its effects."

"Be assured," said Mr. Searle, "that nothing but real misconduct, such as arises from a depraved heart, can ever alienate me from you; of such, I trust, you never can be guilty, for your heart is at present uncorrupted."

"And you, my dear Sir, have fortified it too well with really good principles for—"

"Be not too confident of your own strength," said Mr. Searle; "at Linwood your virtuous dispositions never shake—but at Linwood you have no temptations; but when you mix in the world, where pleasure will attract, example seduce, and false reasoning corrupt you, then will be the test of your principles, Melbourne, learn to bear ridicule; you have never yet been subjected

to its shafts, and you know not how deeply they will gall your disposition."

"I had better endeavour, Sir," said Melbourne, "not to deserve it."

"'Tis the philosophy of a recluse of fifteen," replied Mr. Searle. "No dignity of manners, no propriety of conduct, will secure you from, nay, they will rather expose you to the ridicule of your companions. Every thing in which your manners differ from their's will be a subject for their merriment; any refusal to join in a vicious frolic will expose you to their contempt; but ever remember, Melbourne, that the contempt of the whole world is to be incurred sooner than that of your own heart."

"Good God, Sir!" exclaimed Melbourne, "let me not go into this world, where rectitude is to be the butt of ridicule; where compliance or contempt are the alternative."

"They are not necessary alternatives," replied Mr. Searle; "and it is possible, with good-nature and good sense, to avoid either. More particular instructions I cannot give you;

you; for the propriety of your conduct must depend on the circumstance in point; but these possible evils must not discourage you; one part of your character will secure you some respect."

Melbourne's eyes glistened as he enquired what that was.

"That you are a good fighter," replied Mr. Searle; "that you thrashed both the Macartneys."

With a look of disappointment, Melbourne said, "Is that all, Sir?"

"Indeed, brother," cried Miss Searle, "you are in one of your gloomy humours now, and are too discouraging; you should not damp his hopes."

"My Mary," said Mr. Searle, "I would not damp them, but to fix them on a firmer foundation. Melbourne has been used to no competition; he is wholly unacquainted with the teasing manners of other boys, or the mode in which they endeavour to carry their point, be it right or wrong. Hitherto Melbourne has been under no influence but of

those who wished to guide him right. It will no longer be the general object of those with whom he will mix, that Melbourne should do nothing blameable, and should attain the highest perfection of which he is capable; and I fear he will soon find the difference between practical and theoretical philosophy. Here, where no passions blind, no temptations seduce, there is nothing more easy than to act aright; the difficulty and the merit increase in equal proportions, however, as he mixes with others."

"That, however," said Melbourne, "is a consolation at least; if the struggle cost me some pain, the triumph will be worth achieving."

"It will," said Mr. Searle, "but it will not be at the time that you will receive that reward. At the moment when you, perhaps, are arduously combating the suggestions of your own inclination, you will be assailed on all sides with raillery, contempt, and false logic; and if you triumph, you will be the
more

more ridiculed. This is the weapon which would most easily conquer you."

"But, Sir," said Melbourne, "you speak only of the boys, and they appear to me to be of the least consequence; what you say cannot apply to the masters."

"True," said Mr. Searle; "but the masters at Eton are masters for learning; it is impossible they should attend to the moral character of the four or five hundred boys under their care, living in different houses, and dispersed a thousand different ways; it is among the boys that the moral character is formed; it is from them nicknames are acquired, and future fame decided."

"And is then the future opinion of the world," asked Melbourne, "to depend on the caprice of the boys?"

"And not unjustly, Melbourne;" said Mr. Searle; "those boys, now of your own age, will hereafter be men—your contemporaries; and it is of your contemporaries that the opinion will chiefly influence your fate; but though there will always be some who will

endeavour to laugh at any good and moral resolutions, they will not make against you by and bye unless your manner be too censorial; boys will not bear a dictator among their companions."

"Oh! Sir," said Melbourne, "I had better give up these boasted advantages."

"Not so," said Mr. Searle; "if you act properly, these very circumstances will be of advantage to you; they will correct that asperity and foreness to ridicule which is what I most apprehend in your disposition. You will see boys at Eton respected by their companions, and yet conducting themselves with propriety; I hope you will be one of these."

"We are talking of all these things," said Melbourne with a sigh, "and forgetting that we are this day to part—that for the first time in my life I am to leave my only friends, and to launch out on the world, among entire strangers, with no human being out of dear Linwood who will be interested about me. Hitherto I have not felt a deserted being, but hereafter—— Oh Miss Searle!"—

"My

“ My dear Melbourne !” said Miss Searle.

“ Nor will you hereafter, my dear Harry; said Mr. Searle, “ you will soon find friends, and——”

“ And my father and mother, ought I to leave them ?”

“ That consideration comes rather late, Harry,” replied Mr. Searle ; “ but I hope the step you are going to take will enable you to be of service to them hereafter, when they will require your assistance more than they do now.”

“ But I ought at least to tell them I am going,” said Melbourne, “ for I flew hither with my letter before I knew the contents.”

“ True,” said Mr. Searle ; “ we will walk with you to the cottage. Come, Mary, we will not quit Melbourne till he is taken from us.”

“ And when shall we see him again ?” said Miss Searle.

“ Not immediately, I fear,” said Mr. Searle ; “ Linwood is two hundred miles
H 3 from

from the metropolis, and it is a journey he will not speedily undertake."

"Good God!" said Melbourne, "and must I leave it?"

"Be consistent, Melbourne," said Mr. Searle seriously. "When you thought the plan was to be abandoned, you saw only its advantages, and regretted its loss. You would no longer remain contented with the quiet obscurity of Linwood, now a more active and a more brilliant career has been opened to you; and were it now to be abandoned, Linwood would be no longer the abode of peace and content; you have had a glimpse of something beyond it."

"Oh! Sir," said Melbourne, blushing, "Linwood is all the world to me; beyond it all seems vanity and vexation of spirit; but indeed I hope I am not changeable."

"The uncertainty you have felt hitherto," said Mr. Searle, "has been unavoidable; but you must learn to be firm in your wishes. If to go is best, go with cheerfulness, nor pine after the comforts you resign. If to stay here

is

is preferred, long not for the more brilliant career you relinquish; but you left the decision to me—I have no doubt but that it is better you should go. Go then, Melbourne; but go with all the springy ardour of youth, hoping every thing—even to a reunion with your friends. Come, Mary, are you ready?"

Miss Searle was quite equipped, and Melbourne sighed deeply as he shut the door of the parsonage after them.

CHAP. XIII.

A PARTING.

AS they walked along to the cottage, Miss Searle, who thought her brother had treated Melbourne with an ill-timed severity, talked chiefly to him in a most friendly and affectionate manner, and asked him many questions about Julia, to which Melbourne made rather vague replies, for he too had felt the increased seriousness of Mr. Searle's manner; and when they reached the cottage, contrived, as Miss Searle entered first, to catch the eye of her brother, which beaming with kindness and sorrow, quieted his uneasiness. He took Mr. Searle's hand, who pressed his with the warmest

warmest affection, and they entered the cottage together. Jenny Edmonds was at work, and John was just come in; and Mr. Searle in a few words told them that Melbourne was about to leave them for the present, a piece of intelligence for which they were partly prepared, having heard of Mr. Macartney's offer; and when they had expressed their good wishes for their dear Harry, Mr. and Miss Searle, and Melbourne left them to eat their dinner, and walked backwards and forwards on the green before the house.

Mr. Searle now turned to Melbourne; "Harry," said he, "it is right, before you enter on the world, to tell you the few particulars we know respecting your birth; they are, indeed, very few. That you are not the son of Mr. and Mrs. Edmonds, you must have understood from not bearing their name, though nothing has been said on the subject; but whose child you are, we are wholly unable to conjecture—most probably you will never know;—the motives that in-

duced your parents to part with you probably still subsist; and if, as it is not unlikely, they are now separated for ever from each other, they would be very far from wishing to recognize their offspring. You are then—Melbourne! What right you have to that name is doubtful; but if you meet with Melbournes in the world, do not imagine them your relations; the name undoubtedly did not belong to either of your parents; it was assumed for the purpose of concealment. You are, and most probably ever will be, an unconnected individual: when I say this, I speak in point of family connections; those of friendship—I am proud to say, my pupil is formed to cherish and to endear.”

“And do you apprehend then,” said Melbourne with a faltering voice, “that my parents, that I——”

“I do fear,” replied Mr. Searle, “that your parents were only united by love; and if so, as so many years have elapsed, they are most probably now separated by interest, and then neither party can well claim you. I

trust you will make friends more powerful to serve you than I am, but on my attachment you may ever depend; and should you get through College, and be thrown on the world without a prospect of success, return to Linwood, and the arms of affection shall ever be open to receive you."

Tears spoke the agitation of Melbourne's mind; he felt not all the ignominy attached by the world to the opinion of his birth, but he felt that he was an isolated being—that he was going to quit, perhaps for ever, the only friends he possessed; and, lingering behind Mr. Searle and his sister, he leaned his head against a tree, and indulged the bitterness of sorrow.

Mr. Searle presently after perceiving the affliction of his pupil, approached him, and tenderly embracing him, bade him be comforted, adding, "Let not George Macartney see you thus."

Melbourne clung closer to the bosom of his friend, and whispered, "It is not yet too late to retract; my indecision will be known

to my indulgent monitor; suffer me to remain at Linwood."

"If it is your choice to stay here, Melbourne," said Mr. Searle, "it certainly is not too late; but it is too late to continue to enjoy here the same happiness you have hitherto felt. Regret will embitter this abode; but let me remind you, Harry, that though we have not now time to recapitulate all our arguments on this subject, yet we had, on mature deliberation, decided it to be best that you should go. If, indeed, you are determined to continue here, who shall control you?"

"That look, my dear Sir," replied Melbourne, "that tone of voice would instantly control my most impetuous feelings. I acknowledge my weakness, and will immediately conquer it; and I think, when far distant from you, my friend, if ever I should be on the point of plunging into error, your 'Who shall controul you?' shall rush upon my mind, and recal my wandering inclinations."

Mr.

Mr. Searle pressed his ingenuous pupil still closer to his breast, and gave him such cordial, such unequivocal praise, that in the midst of his melancholy, joy flashed on Melbourne's heart, and for a moment sparkled in his eyes. They were now joined by Miss Searle, who felt a great deal of the melancholy which poor Harry had so fully expressed; yet neither Mr. Searle nor his sister knew the full extent of their loss, nor how vacant their hours would become when this dear pupil no longer depended on them for every advantage. He had come to them at a very fortunate period for them, just as the ardour of youth had subsided, and before languor and tedium had taken possession of their souls. He had provided them an occupation of sufficient magnitude to interest every feeling of their hearts, and they were scarcely older for the ten years he had passed under their management. Now that increased age would press upon them at once, and, deprived of their interesting employment, many hours would hang heavy on their hands,

hands, they both felt great regret at parting with Harry Melbourne; but they were not at present aware how much he had conduced to their happiness.

Harry now looking up, saw a lad advancing towards Linwood, and recognizing George, he said, "There is my summons." Miss Searle took his hand, gave it a cordial pressure of sincere affection, and with a look of tenderness, endeavoured to speak her good wishes, but she failed in the attempt; and while Melbourne bowed upon and kissed her hand, no sound escaped her lips. She then quitted them, and walked towards the parsonage, and presently after George Macartney reached them. Uncontrolled by the presence of Mr. Searle, he addressed Melbourne with the most haughty familiarity;—"Well, my lad, my father, you see, has not forgot his offer; come, are you ready to go? What, have you forgot all about it, that you stand so like a post? I say my father, Mr. Macartney, has sent me to fetch you. I suppose

suppose by this time you know your own mind."

Melbourne had all this time been devising some expedient to avoid this *tête-à-tête* walk with George; and bethinking himself that that young gentleman could not know that he was apprized of his visit, he replied, "Certainly, Sir; since I had the pleasure of seeing Mr. Macartney here, I have considered of the offers he was so good as to make me; and my excellent friend Mr. Searle, thinking as I do, that they are very generous and very advantageous to me, I have held myself in readiness, should Mr. Macartney still wish for it, to accompany him, and put myself under his direction; but as I was not aware of your arrival to-day, I am not actually prepared to set off instantly, but that I may not detain you here, I will follow you as soon as possible, if you will be so good as to carry my respects to Mr. Macartney."

"Why, your wardrobe cannot take long in putting up," replied George, "nor can it
be

be heavy to carry ; and I suppose you won't be above carrying it."

"Melbourne," said Mr. Searle, who had penetrated his motives, "if you can be ready in a few minutes, I will accompany you to Mr. Macartney. I should be very glad to see the gentleman who will henceforward be your patron."

Melbourne bowed, and stepping into the cottage, collected a small packet of linen ; for as George had very justly supposed, his wardrobe was not quite so extensive as that of Count Bruhl ; and taking a most affectionate leave of Mr. and Mrs. Edmonds, in a very short time he rejoined them on the green.

Mr. Searle had all along intended seeing Mr. Macartney, in order to give him some idea of Melbourne's character, and perhaps in order to form himself some idea of the character of the man to whom his pupil was to be so much obliged ; but in the press of conversation since the receipt of Julia's letter, he had forgotten to intimate this intention to Melbourne.

Melbourne. They now proceeded together in no very lively conversation, and soon arrived at the inn, when George led them to the parlour where Mr. Macartney, his daughter, and niece, and Mr. Edmund Macartney were waiting for them. George, throwing open the door, exclaimed, "Here, Sir, I have brought Melbourne and his tutor, as you desired."

Poor Melbourne blushed at this mode of introduction, and looking in Mr. Searle's face, saw his wonder as strongly marked as his own. Harry now went up to Mr. Macartney, and spoke to him in a very handsome manner, and then presented Mr. Searle; that George and Edmund were whispering and laughing with Miss Macartney, and evidently at him, did not disconcert him, though it brought a glow of indignation into his face; but Mr. Macartney, after politely receiving Mr. Searle, and thanking him for the favour of his company, told Melbourne he was glad to see him; and then asked him if there was no one present to whom he wished to speak.

Melbourne.

Melbourne, who understood that Mr. Macartney would not be sorry to converse unobserved with Mr. Searle, went and made his bow to Miss Macartney and Edmund, and then speaking to little William, turned to Julia, who sat rather apart from the other young people, and hoped she had continued to enjoy good health. Julia blushed exceedingly as she looked up in Melbourne's face, and in a hesitating voice, said she had been quite well; then looking at a vacant seat near her, Melbourne obeyed her wishes, and placed himself by her. He asked if she had had a pleasant journey, and endeavoured to induce her to speak, but she was evidently all constraint and embarrassment; distressed by the continued attention which Miss Macartney and her brothers directed to her, and unable to continue any thing like a conversation. Melbourne, to relieve her, talked to little William, and endeavoured by every means in his power to lessen her constraint, but it continued in an equal degree, till at length, as by one consent, Miss Macartney and the
boys

boys left the room, and William eagerly following, she remained as it were tête-à-tête with Melbourne; for Mr. Macartney and Mr. Searle were very deeply engaged in conversation. She now turned to her companion, and said, in a half whisper, "I hope, Mr. Melbourne, you won't think——; but I could not help writing to you; I am sure you are not one——"

"I am sure," said Melbourne, "I am most infinitely obliged to you; and I believe but for your letter I should not have come."

"I am very glad I wrote then," said Julia; "but remember nobody knows of it; you had better burn the letter, for fear——"

"Believe me," said Melbourne, "you need not fear my carelessness or indiscretion; no one shall ever know it from me."

They continued conversing in a low voice, which at length caught Mr. Macartney's attention. "What, Julia," said he, smiling, "are you explaining to Mr. Melbourne the nature of drowning? Come hither, my love! Mr. Melbourne, pray advance this way."

.Mr.

Mr. Macartney took Julia's hand, and giving her a hearty kiss, presented her to Mr. Searle, as the little girl whose life Melbourne had saved, and assured him that she was of a very good and grateful disposition; and then turning to Melbourne, said, "I think myself very fortunate, Mr. Melbourne, to have it in my power to be of service to so deserving a young man as Mr. Searle assures me you are. I hope you will find proper friendship and attention from every branch of my family; and, indeed, I dare say you will from every one but my little Julia here, and she seems terribly disposed to hate you—are you not, my love?"

"No, my dear uncle, indeed," answered Julia, with great innocence; "and I am sure it would be very ungrateful of me if I was."

"So it would, my love," replied Mr. Macartney, "and believe me, I approve of your gratitude to your preserver. Mr. Melbourne, your friend Mr. Searle will do us the favour to dine with us, and we shall go one stage after dinner. We shall reach my house the day

day after to-morrow, and we shall then have your company for a fortnight before Eton school opens; that time you will employ in making any necessary preparations, in which my sons and daughter will assist with pleasure."

The dinner came, the young people returned, Mr. Searle and Melbourne made but a scanty meal, and nobody spoke but Mr. Macartney and Mr. Searle. The young people evidently avoided conversing with Melbourne, though they whispered and laughed now and then with each other. Mr. Macartney reprimanded them for their rudeness; hoped they would be better acquainted by and by; and when the carriages came to the door, he put the two girls and William into the post-chaise, and placing himself in the coach with Melbourne and the elder boys, they drove from the inn, and Mr. Searle returned to Linwood.

CHAP. XIV.

IN WHICH OUR HERO ENTERS ON A NEW
SITUATION.

MELBOURNE had now quitted Linwood in search of advantages which were to lead to happiness; but that they were not themselves happiness, he was convinced by the pangs he felt when he looked back to the mountain, the lake, the parsonage, and the friends he had left. Their journey, which lasted two days, besides the afternoon of their departure, while it confirmed Mr. Macartney in a good opinion of his new *protégé*, and Melbourne in a warm affection for Mr. Macartney, did not equally increase the goodwill of the boys to their fellow-traveller; and

and Melbourne was many times tempted to wish that these boasted advantages were not to be so dearly purchased. He endeavoured, however, to put in practice the excellent lessons Mr. Searle had ever inculcated, and to act as his own heart approved, without attending to the ridicule, the false judgment, or the malevolence of others. He continued to behave with the greatest openness, treating Mr. Macartney with a respectful affection, and the young men with a friendly familiarity, while they both acted with a visible restraint towards their father, and with a haughty condescension and impertinent raillery towards Melbourne. These amiable manners, indeed, were not perpetually exerted for the comfort of their new companion, for they did not wish to suffer their father to see their dislike, and inclination to torment him; but they contrived to say many things, and to look more, which escaped Mr. Macartney, while Melbourne felt them with the utmost poignancy. He yet preserved his equanimity, and feeling how much this triumph
cost

cost him, concluded that as none could ever cost him more, he was secure of perpetual victory. Poor Melbourne, without experience, was not aware that the inconveniences which may be borne for a time, become intolerable by their continuance; that "from small vexations continually repeated flows the misery of man, not from any heavy crush of overwhelming evil," (*Johnson*); that the triumph which he could obtain over two boys, restrained from the utmost refinement of their malice by the presence of their father, was very inadequate to the difficulty of a victory when these and many more pressed hard upon him without any restraint at all; and that the mere internal consciousness of his success, should he even always succeed, would hardly counterbalance the suffering such conduct, continued and increased, would occasion to him. But it is well for all virtue, for all energy of character, that young minds do not thus foresee the extent of the evils to which they are exposed; if they did, human life could present no motive strong enough to induce

induce Genius to exert itself. Sunk into a quiet apathy, the malevolent and the wicked would become the sole proprietors of the great stage of the world. They would carry their love of tormenting to the greatest possible extent; for these characters are peculiarly disposed to exert their power where it is most acutely felt.

At length, however, this painful journey was at an end, and they arrived at Mr. Macartney's country seat, which was at about thirty miles distance from the metropolis, but near a large town which sufficiently supplied the wants they felt during the summer, and in the winter they always went to London. From this town all necessary apparel was immediately procured for Melbourne, who looked so much better for having cast off his country slough, that Miss Macartney sometimes condescended to treat him with civility. This young lady, who was tall, fashionable, and pretty, and just nineteen, had been for three years entire mistress of her father's house, and of herself, and having received the

polish of a very fashionable London boarding-school, she had learnt to make the best use of the power her father had invested her with. It was strange that the children of Mr. Macartney, who was certainly a very good and good-tempered man, should all, except little William, have some untoward bent in their dispositions; but they had inherited the temper of their mother, who had not contributed to the happiness of her husband while she lived, though he had so tenderly adored her for her beauty, that he had implicitly given up to her in every respect, and being of a very easy disposition, had hardly felt his subjection.

Matilda, though she had great power over her father, had not yet succeeded to the absolute dominion Mrs. Macartney had exercised; for neither she nor Edmund and George, though all united in the same design, could prevail on their father to relinquish the plan he had formed in favour of Melbourne. He even seemed more disposed to like that young man the more they endeavoured to prejudice him against him; and now that he was be-
come

come one of the family, he daily rose in Mr. Macartney's esteem, who saw with regret that this unknown youth, without any accidental advantages, without the means of improvement his sons had ever enjoyed, very far surpassed them not only in classical and literary attainments, but in outward polish and suavity of manners. Melbourne's politeness was not indeed that of the world; it was the native emanation of a benevolent and amiable heart, influenced by no circumstances, but continuing ever the same, as nothing could alter the general good dispositions of his mind. He was polite and attentive to Miss Macartney, though he plainly saw she was a frivolous being, who considered all attention as her due, on account of her sex, never seeking to look upon herself, or induce others to look upon her in the light of a rational being. Fond of power, she scrupled not to exercise it perpetually, though too often she thwarted the inclinations, and lessened the pleasures of others. But *others* was a consideration that never entered Miss

Macartney's brain;—for her, the world was all centered in a single point, and she treated *others* with the same contempt the word occasions in an advertisement, when humbly tagging after the nobility and gentry, and supposed to include all the rabble of creation. Yet this haughty damsel vouchsafed to look with rather more complacency on Melbourne when equipped for Eton. Melbourne felt, and was not flattered by the difference of her manners; but turned for relief to the sensible and equal Julia, who had ever taken a pride in shewing her regard for Mr. Melbourne; and indeed, as she innocently told him one day when there happened to be nobody by, she had been strangely bantered by all her cousins about her regard for him, though she was sure it was natural and quite right that she should be grateful to, and love him, for having saved her life. Melbourne took great pleasure in the conversation of this ingenuous child, and used frequently to read with her, and walk with her, and very much enjoyed her natural good sense. Their frequent

frequent interviews were not unnoticed by Edmund and George, who really rallied the poor girl in terms a great deal too coarse, though they generally chose their opportunity when Melbourne was not by, for they feared the weight of his arm. One day, however, he happened to enter just as Edmund was uttering a very coarse sarcasm about children being in love, and very coming and inviting misses; and in a moment he felt the blood mount rapidly to his face, and just as Edmund was going to repeat his insults, having got his hand under her chin, to prevent her hiding her face, which was covered with blushes and tears, Melbourne went softly behind Julia, and fixed his eye full upon her ill mannered opponent. Melbourne had formed a resolution not to fight till they were at Eton; and he had the triumph to see the haughty insulter of a helpless girl let go his hold, change countenance, and shew signs of confusion; but instantly recollecting himself, Edmund pursued his speech to Julia, who, however, finding herself at liberty, made her escape in a great hurry.

Melbourne still continued looking at Edmund, who, abashed by the steady countenance before him, felt he had no resource but in a quarrel, and immediately challenged Melbourne to fight.

"I shall not fight, Mr. Edmund," said Melbourne; "and not because I dare not, for you know I dare; but because I do not chuse it."

Edmund, determined to provoke him to a battle, called him a thousand opprobrious names, but Melbourne let him run out his fury, and then calmly replied, "Your insults to me I can very well bear; you see I am determined not to fight you, and therefore you do not fear to provoke me; but I am satisfied with having, by a mere look, checked the career of your insolence towards your cousin."

And with these words Melbourne coolly walked out of the room, leaving Edmund bursting with rage, which, when they met again at dinner, had left a horrible impression on his countenance.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

VERY LONG INDEED.

ABOUT a fortnight passed over, during which Melbourne gained no ground in the good graces of the young Macartneys, but he lost none in those of their father, who was pleased with the affectionate attentions of this youth, and could not but compare his manners towards himself with those of his sons, who behaved with very little deference indeed to their father, though they felt before him a kind of awkward restraint, because they did not like to let him see all the frivolity and malignity of their common conversations together; while Melbourne, having nothing to

conceal, put not the least constraint on himself when in company with his superiors, and yet treated Mr. Macartney with a most graceful and grateful respect.

At the end of that time, the three young men went to Eton, where, for some weeks, poor Melbourne found himself very unpleasantly situated. The Macartneys took care to publish through the whole school the extreme generosity of their father to the young man who came with them; and as, in this young world, the same passions and prejudices prevail as in the greater world, in favour of opulence and independence, the greatest part of the boys treated, with the utmost contempt, a youth who was placed there by the unparalleled liberality of Mr. Macartney.

Not a day passed without recalling to Melbourne's mind Mr. Searle's cautions and advice, as well as the apprehensions he entertained of the irritability and soreness of his temper. He felt himself peculiarly alive to ridicule, and for a long time suffered so much at Eton, as to make him thoroughly regret
ever

ever having quitted the peaceful retiremeⁿt of Linwood. Perhaps, the boys having discovered by what means to keep him in subjection, his situation would have been thoroughly wretched, had it not been for the friendship of Lord George Montague, a youth about the same age as Edmund Macartney, with whom, however, from a total dissimilarity of dispositions, he had never been on terms of intimacy, but very soon entered into a cordial amity with Melbourne, though near four years younger. As his Lordship had a great degree of penetration, he soon discovered the intrinsic worth of Melbourne, and the first acts of his friendship were exerted in protecting him from the raillery and unkindness of a knot of boys of the same party and temper as the Macartneys. But having, after a time, perceived, what had at first escaped him, the real spirit which Melbourne possessed, under the appearance of tameness and a dejected temper, he soon taught him the moments when to exert that spirit in his own defence, and when to repel impertinence with disdain,

so that having, at length, fought two or three battles, and learnt to disguise the fretfulness he felt at the gross and insulting raillery of his companions, Melbourne became an object of some consideration in the school. Every day gave him more command of himself under the provocations he met with from the Macartney party; and as his talents had placed him in a situation above any lads of his own age, and very little below Edmund, he was soon treated with increasing respect. The civility which was at first enforced by the example and weight of Lord George Montague, he soon learned to maintain by his own spirit and resolution; and having conquered the first obstacles in the way of his happiness, he shewed so much real goodness and generosity, that he became adored by all the younger lads, and his friendship was courted by most of the elder ones; even the Macartneys themselves treated him with a degree of consideration, which Melbourne, induced by his gratitude to their father, repaid with the most cordial kindness and affection, and performed

performed many acts of friendship for them; for as they neither of them possessed either the talents or the application of Melbourne, they were glad to have recourse to his assistance when the lessons were beyond their abilities or their industry.

Melbourne now thought himself quite happy;—distinguished by the masters, well treated by the boys, and possessing the cordial friendship of Lord George Montague, he had not a wish ungratified, and wrote to Mr. Searle in such a strain of happiness and content, as gave that worthy man entire satisfaction. The Christmas vacation was now approaching, and Melbourne looked forward with delight to a nearer acquaintance with London, where they were to spend all the holidays. This desired time approached; the boys dispersed to their different habitations; and Melbourne, with a heart beating high with expectation, accompanied the two young Macartneys to a large house in Bloomsbury-square. The extent, the bustle, the noise, and the variety which the streets of London exhibited,

exhibited, fully answered the expectations he had formed; and Mr. Macartney had great pleasure in seeing his first surprise. No surprise, however, had the power of obliterating from Melbourne's mind the sincere delight he felt at Mr. Macartney's cordial reception of him; nor of rendering him unmindful of a vacancy in the society, which certainly gave him pain—Julia was not there; but neither of the Macartneys enquired for their cousin, and he supposed he had been mistaken in imagining that she resided with the family, and concluding she had been only on a visit in the summer;—he asked if she was well, and Miss Macartney answered, “Oh! yes, I believe so.” Melbourne was silenced, and mentioned her no more. That the young Macartneys expressed no surprise at the diminution of their family circle, arose from their having been apprized by a letter, which they had not communicated to Melbourne, of Julia's being gone to live entirely with an aunt in the country. The holidays passed in a variety of amusements, which gave far more
delight

delight to the unexperienced heart of Melbourne, than to his two companions, who were more accustomed to the gaieties of the town. Melbourne, however, looked in vain at all the public places he visited for Lord George Montague;—he was never fortunate enough to see him; for indeed that young nobleman was in the country with his family. Delightful, and fraught with enjoyment as the holidays were, Melbourne was not unmindful of the task assigned him; and having finished it at a very early period, employed himself in giving it daily corrections and improvements; and the last two days previous to their return to Eton, was prevailed on by George to lend him some assistance towards completing his. Melbourne, who was all good-nature, undertook the office, and was surprised to see that not one word was yet done: not discouraged, however, he began upon it, and had proceeded some way, when he heard the voices of Edmund and George very loud in anger, and as his own name was frequently repeated, he was induced to attend
to

to their conversation. He found that Edmund was angry with his brother for having, as he expressed it, stolen a march upon him, when he knew he had meant to give his task to Melbourne to do; and that, as he was the elder by two years, he had a right to be served first.

Melbourne's blood boiled at being thus made a property of by these two boys; who, having quarrelled together for some time, at last gave way to their envy and dislike to Melbourne, and agreed in abusing him, yet in wishing to owe to him their preservation at Eton from disgrace for not having completed their tasks. They both came into the room where Melbourne was employed at George's lesson, who began thus, "Well, Melbourne, how much have you done? Is it almost finished? 'Cause Edmund here wants you to do some of his."

"I should wish to know," replied Melbourne, "whether Mr. Macartney would thank me for giving this assistance to his sons, who

who are either too idle or too backward to work for themselves."

"Damn you," said Edmund, "what do you mean by that? Do you presume to play the censor to us?"

"If you had not authorised me to do it," replied Melbourne, "by having recourse to my assistance, I should not have interfered in what was no business of mine; but I do not know whether I am quite justifiable in screening two young men of your age from disgrace."

"Damn him," said Edmund, "I had rather suffer any disgrace at Eton, than lay myself under obligations to this preaching, prating, beggarly brat. I can't think why my father throws away his money on such a proud, conceited rascal."

"Macartney," said Melbourne, "you know I do not love quarrelling and fighting, and particularly with either of you, for the sake of your father;—be advised—insult me no more, but begin your lesson, and when I have

have done some more of George's, I will assist you with all my heart."

"I hope you mean to be a parson," said Edmund; "your Reverence will be a fine man in the pulpit. Canting dog! insult you! What are you worth but to be insulted? I think it is doing you too much honour to have asked your help. You shall do none of my task, I promise you. George, I wonder you are not ashamed to let him go on with your's."

Edmund, who was to quit Eton at Easter, concerned himself less about the anger or the disgrace he should incur than George, who was to stay as long as Melbourne; that is, a year and a half from the present time. George therefore muttered a few words tending to conciliate matters; but Edmund, flushed with the manhood of nineteen, and the certainty of a large fortune, would not hear of making up their quarrel, but continued abusing Melbourne, yet cautiously avoided striking the first blow; till at length, Melbourne making some cool contemptuous reply to the ill-mannered

nered insults he so freely gave vent to, provoked him so much, that he hit him a great blow on the face, which roused Melbourne from his desk; and though he received several severe bruises himself, he at length mastered his insolent opponent, who lay extended on the ground under the victorious arm of Melbourne. At this instant Mr. Macartney entered; and seeing Melbourne standing over his son, and George writing at the desk, (where he had placed himself to avoid the battle, and had taken up the pen when he heard his father) immediately took Melbourne by the arm, and pulled him away from Edmund, to whom he loudly called to get up.

“I am sorry,” said Mr. Macartney, “to see only one of my family employed as I could wish; as for you, young men, retire to your separate rooms, and compose yourselves; I shall speak to you both by and by.” Then bestowing some further undeserved commendations on George, he accompanied both the lads to their rooms, and locked them in, that they

they might not renew their quarrel. Some hours, not entirely pleasant ones, did Melbourne pass in this solitude, before he heard his door unlocked, and saw Mr. Macartney enter, with a sterner countenance than he had ever seen him wear; and with a more angry voice than usual, thus addressed him:—

“ I have already examined both my sons, young man, as to the grounds of this quarrel, and am now desirous to hear your account of it. I should be sorry, Mr. Melbourne, to remind you of any gratitude due to me; your own heart ought to be the best monitor on this occasion. I can only say, that a consistent conduct, and a peaceable and friendly demeanour, would be the best proof you could give of the little gratitude you may, perhaps, think you owe to me.”

“ My dear Sir,” said Melbourne, “ Heaven is my witness that I feel the full extent of the gratitude due to you for your unmerited benefits, and that the pleasantest moments of my life are those in which I can demonstrate to you the truth of that sentiment. To have
lived

lived in friendship with your sons, has ever been the first wish of my heart ; nor will the accident of this morning at all injure or lessen that friendship."

" I believe not," replied Mr. Macartney with an incredulous smile ; " I believe there subsists between you a friendship incapable of increase or of diminution ; witness your first battle at Linwood, and this of to-day, to say nothing of many marks of ill-will which have not escaped my observation, though I said nothing about them. But this equivocal manner, Mr. Melbourne, will impose on me no longer ; at Linwood I remember you adopted the same artifice of silence with respect to the cause of your quarrel ; I had then no right to insist on having the whole explained, but I have that right now, and I am resolved to exert it."

" Oh ! Sir," said Melbourne, " you do not yet know my heart, nor how readily it yields to persuasion what it refuses to grant to compulsion. To you, my dear Sir, as my benefactor and friend, I would wish to lay open

open my whole heart ; and in that light, Mr. Macartney might command the inmost recesses of my soul."

" You are proud, young man," said Mr. Macartney.

" I believe I am, Sir," replied Melbourne, " and many people would say, too proud for my situation ; but pardon me if I say, in my situation I would not be less proud. Poor and dependant as I am, nothing but internal consciousness could preserve me from degradation."

" You are a singular character, Melbourne," said Mr. Macartney, " and I must confess I am inclined to have a good opinion of you ; above all things, I hope to find you above hypocrisy."

" I trust you ever will, Sir," answered Melbourne ; " and that in no action of my life I shall ever deserve to forfeit your esteem."

" Your own esteem," replied Mr. Macartney, " seems too firmly founded to be easily forfeited."

" My

"My dear Sir," said Melbourne, "I am conscious no human being is more liable to error than myself; but of ill intentions, or a depraved heart, I trust I shall never have to accuse myself."

"Well, Melbourne," said Mr. Macartney, "but this argument gives me no insight into this morning's adventure; I hope you mean to give me an account of it?"

"I wish you would excuse me, Sir."

"But I do not intend to excuse it," said Mr. Macartney; "and if indeed you have the openness you profess, tell me the whole, and do not fear in me too severe a judge."

"It is not your severity I apprehend, Sir," replied Melbourne; "and—were it only—"

"Your hesitations, Melbourne," said Mr. Macartney, "imply as much as your words could do; do you not mean to say, or at least mean me to understand, that were it only to include yourself? now do you not perceive to what inference this evidently tends; that your account must greatly criminate my son?"

I will

“ I will tell you all, Sir,” replied Melbourne, “ and leave you to draw no inference. I knew not till this morning that George had neglected his lesson; but he came and begged me to give him some assistance. I consented; but however, from merely asking me now and then a word, to save time, as he said, he left it entirely to me; and as I continued working in expectation of his return, I heard him and his brother at very high words; a thin partition only divided us, so that I could not help hearing my own name, and found they were contending which had the best right to my assistance. As they mixed many ungenerous allusions to my situation, with the dependance they expressed on my assistance, I must acknowledge I felt angry; and when they came in to claim my help for Edmund, my pique induced me to represent to them how wrong it was in them to receive, and in me to give such assistance. This argument, Sir, though just in itself, I was to blame in urging, because it occurred to me not from its own propriety, but as an evasion

evasion of their request. Edmund was angry; called me tutor, censor, preacher, and not contented with that, added many opprobrious epithets to induce me to quarrel; but I had recollected myself, and having made a law to myself to avoid any quarrels with your sons, particularly in your house, I endeavoured to conciliate Edmund by promising to do some of his lesson by and by. Here again I know I was wrong, in endeavouring to purchase a reconciliation by a concession which I knew to be improper. However, Edmund would not be pacified, and at length, finding I resisted the provocations he gave me, he fell upon me with a heavy blow, as I sat at the desk doing George's exercise."

"And is this the truth, Melbourne?" said Mr. Macartney.

"It is, indeed," replied Melbourne.

"And how much had you done of George's lesson?" asked Mr. Macartney.

"I cannot exactly tell the number of lines, Sir," said Melbourne; "but I believe about fifty. I had got precisely to the place
where

Diomed wounds Mars, and he runs bellowing away."

"Well, Melbourne," said Mr. Macartney, "there is an air of candour in your relation of this fact, that inclines me to believe you, though it entirely contradicts both my sons. However the matter must rest as it is; are you willing to be reconciled to them?"

"With George, Sir," replied Melbourne, "I had no quarrel, and I am ready to shake hands with Edmund this moment."

"Come, then," said Mr. Macartney; but no, I will bring Edmund to you; stay here a few minutes."

Melbourne reseated himself as Mr. Macartney left the room; and grew uneasy as one quarter of an hour elapsed after another, till near two hours had gone by, before Mr. Macartney returned, and when he did, he was alone.

Mr. Macartney's look was severe, as he said, "I am sorry, Mr. Melbourne, to have had your account contradicted in a very material point. George assures me he had done his

his lesson by himself, and, indeed, shewed it to me in his own hand-writing."

Melbourne coloured extremely, and replied, "When you first asked me for an account of this unfortunate affair, Sir, I was very unwilling to give it you, because I knew that if I spoke the truth, I must throw a great deal of blame on your two sons; but engaged as my honour now is in the cause, I must request some trial to prove my veracity, since you are not convinced by my having mentioned the exact line where I left off."

"Why, in fact, Melbourne, George's lesson is done beyond that line, and continued in the same (which I know to be his own) hand-writing. See, here is the paper."

Melbourne took the paper, and said, "It is true, Sir, but there has been time enough since for him to have added this; besides, do you not observe that this is written out without a blot or erasure, and what first copy of a school-boy's lesson ever was so fortunate? However, Sir, I must entreat you to suffer one trial to be made; do you keep that

copy, and let George and myself each do the lines again; we shall then see whose most resemble this disputed production. Yet if he has preserved the first draught, his will be precisely the same. I wish, Sir, you could devise some trial to bring this affair to a certainty."

"I believe, Melbourne," replied Mr. Martney, "we had better let it drop entirely. I am willing to trust you; whether I am deceived or not, I cannot help believing you; yet I should be sorry to lay George under so heavy a displeasure as a fault of this magnitude would subject him to. Be ruled by me, Melbourne, and let it pass. Shake hands with my sons, and trust to my good opinion."

"I feel, Sir, all the motives you have," answered Melbourne, "for declining any further investigation of this affair; and injurious as it is to me, and grating to my soul, to have the smallest doubt subsisting of my veracity, yet my sense of the benefits I receive from you, outweighs my own feelings, and

and I respect those of a father. Yes, Sir, I am ready to shake hands with your sons."

"And this conduct, Melbourne," replied Mr. Macartney, "convinces me that you are in the right; none ever were so moderate who were wrong. I have been endeavouring to persuade my sons to the same mode of conduct, but in vain. George would not suffer the imputation of a lie, nor Edmund of a quarrel; and they insisted, not on any trial of skill, but on an ample confession from you, that you had not done George's lesson, and that you had been the aggressor in the quarrel. As things have ended, I know how to judge between you, and I will prove to you that though a father, I can be impartial. Follow me, Melbourne."

"Since I am cleared in your opinion, Sir," said Melbourne, "I am satisfied. Your sons are conscious internally of the real truth as well as myself; and I do not wish to plunge them into the shame of a detected untruth."

"It is, however," replied Mr. Macartney, a shame which they merit, and shall suffer. Come, Melbourne, I will shew these boys I am not to be imposed upon." And with these words he rose, and led the way to the study, where Edmund and George were ordered to attend.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

NOT SO LONG AS THE LAST.

MELBOURNE followed Mr. Macartney to the study with an agitated heart, divided between the joy he felt at his unequivocal triumph in his benefactor's opinion, and regret for the humiliation his two companions were going to experience. In the few moments they were in the study, before George and Edmund appeared, he besought Mr. Macartney to be contented with a reconciliation.

"I will if they will," replied Mr. Macartney, "and, believe me, I should be glad of it."

The two boys now entered, and their father desired them to bury the past in oblivion, and be cordially reconciled to Melbourne.

"And suffer you, Sir," said Edmund, haughtily, "to remain the dupe of his art, and believe both your sons guilty of prevarication. I am, I own, astonished at your blind partiality for this unknown beggar to the prejudice of your own children, though I know his art can varnish over any falsehood, and make plain honest truth retire before him. I will not be reconciled to him, till he unequivocally acknowledges himself the aggressor in the quarrel, and George the doer of his own lesson."

"You know me too well, Macartney," replied Melbourne, "to expect I should ever unequivocally acknowledge what I know to be untrue."

"Oh!" said George, "you know he's devilish obstinate, Edmund; you might as well attempt to turn the Thames as him."

"Besides," said Edmund, "could his
noble

noble pride ever stoop to acknowledge itself in the wrong?"

"If I were conscious of being in the wrong, Macartney," said Melbourne, "I should be proud of owning it, and proving myself too wise to continue in a known error; but in facts like these, our own hearts must be certain of the truth, and you yourself know that what I assert is the simple truth."

"I neither know nor care what you assert," said Edmund; "but I know that without any provocation, you abused me, and struck me, while my brother was doing his task at the desk, and that you tried to draw him into the quarrel, but that he refused. But I perceive nothing will content you till we are the victims, and my father the complete dupe of your art."

"Come, Edmund," said Melbourne, "you see your father has left us that you might yield with less shame; do not persist in a falsehood, but be reconciled to me, and let all that has passed be buried in eternal oblivion."

“ I will not be reconciled,” said Edmund fiercely; “ I will hold no commerce with an artful viper, who seeks to sting the family that fosters him.”

Mr. Macartney now re-entered. “ Melbourne,” said he, “ I have found an indisputable witness of your veracity in one instance; here is the rough copy of George’s lesson in your hand-writing, which the gentleman probably forgot to destroy; it ends precisely at the line you mentioned, of Mars being wounded by Diomed; and your truth established in one point, it would be folly to entertain the smallest shadow of a doubt respecting the other. So now, boys, your only sensible conduct is to shake hands with Melbourne, if he will do you that favour, and let the past be forgotten; remember you have had no witness of your shame but your father, and that your adversary is generous, and will not divulge the past.”

George advanced with a doubtful step, and seemed half unwilling to offer his hand to Melbourne, who, however, met him more than

than half way, and then went up to Edmund, who was standing fullenly at a little distance.

“Come, Edmund,” said Mr. Macartney, “your error was less than George’s, be not longer in owning it. There can be no doubt of the facts, therefore meet Melbourne’s friendly advances.”

Melbourne touched his shoulder, “Come, Macartney,” said he, “be reconciled.”

Edmund turned round, coolly took hold of Melbourne’s hand, and said, “Now, Sir, you are obeyed;” but with a look that told how dear that obedience cost him, and what a store of rancour he would treasure up in his heart against the unfortunate lad who had caused him so deep a humiliation.

In two days after this event they returned to Eton, where no cordiality ever subsisted between them.

CHAP. XVII.

DOUBTS.

MELBOURNE was delighted to renew his friendship with Lord George Montague, who on his side was rejoiced to see his young friend again; they became inseparable, and Melbourne grieved when he reflected that he was to lose this invaluable friend at Easter, at which time his Lordship was to go to College. There was a young Montague in the lower school, a cousin of Lord George's, who had been his fag, and whom he recommended to the protection of Melbourne after he should have quitted Eton. Melbourne, from Lord George's request, took a good deal of notice of this lad, who was about eleven years old,

old, and in a very short time they became affectionately attached to each other. Melbourne wrote frequently to his beloved friend and first benefactor, Mr. Searle, and to him laid open all the feelings of his heart on every circumstance that occurred. He had very often the delight of receiving the advice of this inestimable friend, who not seldom gave his conduct the most cordial approbation; yet he could not sometimes help betraying a regret that Melbourne was exposed to so much ill-nature and malice. Melbourne now mentioned to him, with the warmest encomiums, his friend Lord George Montague and the young cousin, for whom he felt so strong an affection; and Mr. Searle was delighted at this event, since he knew that Lord George was a nephew of his friend Spencer's, (the elder brother having been lately made a Duke) and thought it possible that young Montague might be his son. From some enquiries which Melbourne made, he soon found that these conjectures were right, and that his future sag, Shirley Monta-

gue, was indeed the son of Mr. Searle's former friend, Spencer Montague.

Easter arrived, and separated the friends. Lord George went to Cambridge, where he was soon followed by Edmund Macartney; and Melbourne remained at Eton, without forming any other friendship at all to compensate for the loss of Lord George Montague; with him, however, he constantly corresponded, and looked forward with pleasure to the time when he should again enjoy his society. That time, like every other future period, pressing imperceptibly but invariably forward, arrived at length, and George Macartney and Melbourne were entered at Cambridge. In all the intermediate time, few events had occurred worth recording; but from the time of his quitting Eton before he went to Cambridge, Melbourne thought he perceived Mr. Macartney's affection for him to grow cooler by degrees. In the same proportion Miss Macartney grew more civil to him; and had he been less a novice in the world, or had he wished to take advantage of the

the

the young lady's partiality, it is to be presumed he might have commanded her warmest affections; but Miss Macartney, handsome and fashionable as she was, was not calculated to attract the tenderness of Melbourne; besides that Melbourne at seventeen thought not of tenderness at all, though his manly figure (now his hair was dressed) and his expressive countenance, were very well calculated to inspire it. Miss Macartney, however, perceived that she made no impression on his heart, and set him down for a cynical philosopher; and as she was not formed to receive very durable ones herself, her affection for Melbourne, not being cherished by any return, soon changed into anger at being overlooked, and quickly degenerated into dislike. She now saw all his conduct in the worst light; and as she had no scruples of conscience, forbore not to represent it so to her father, who, though he ceased not to like and esteem Melbourne, yet certainly treated him with less kindness. Perhaps the feelings of a parent had been wounded by
feeling

seeing a youth, whom he had protected from charity, so completely eclipse his own sons, that wherever they went together, the one received great notice and attention, while the others only met with that civility which they were entitled to as part of Mr. Macartney's family. The young men certainly perceived, and were hurt by this difference; and bearing no good-will to the youth who had thus robbed them of what they thought their due, they spoke of him to their father in rather a disparaging way, dwelling on the little errors which the eagle eyes of envy saw through a magnifying medium; and by repeated, though almost imperceptible, attacks, succeeded at last in giving Mr. Macartney an idea that Melbourne's apparent good conduct was nothing but a series of refined art, and, by such means, weakening his interest in the heart of his protector; and Miss Macartney now joining in the cabal against the poor unoffending youth, so far increased Mr. Macartney's coolness towards him, that Melbourne, long accustomed to the invariable friendship
of

of Mr. Searle, began to balance in his own mind, whether he ought not to relinquish the promised advantages at College, rather than lay himself under further obligations to a man whose conduct made him every day more sensibly feel the weight of those already incurred. Yet occasionally a ray of Mr. Macartney's former partiality broke through the gloom, and when he spoke kindly, Melbourne forgot all his coolness, and concluded that his own jealous fancy had imposed upon him. He was certain he had no friends in the family, and often regretted the absence of Julia, whose generosity towards him he had never forgotten, and who would ever have exerted the utmost of her power to have served him, and to have kept him in favour with her uncle.

In this unpleasant situation, Melbourne had recourse to his usual expedient in all difficulties, and wrote to Mr. Searle in the following terms:—

To

“ TO THE REVEREND MR. SEARLE, AT
LINWOOD.

“ Were you, my excellent friend, less indulgent than you have ever been to all my failings, I should not dare to confess, that after all you have said to warn me against indecision, I feel some doubt respecting the propriety of continuing in the career I have already entered upon; yet to you I ought to lay open every feeling of my heart, certain from you to receive the best counsel for my future conduct. Tell me then, my friend, whether I ought to be so far discouraged by the coolness I have already mentioned having perceived in Mr. Macartney's manner towards me, as to relinquish any further advantages from his generosity? Am I, or am I not, justified in thinking that he repents the engagement he has formed with me, and would be glad to be handsomely rid of me? And if this is the case, ought I not to take the slightest hint, and withdraw from his family an inmate whom he begins to think a burthen? I have told you, that notwithstanding

ing the coolness which has occasioned me these disquiets, there are occasional emanations of his natural benevolence, and of his former distinguished partiality for me, and at those moments I could entirely forget the interruptions my happiness has lately received. In the young men and Miss Macartney, I am sure I have no friends; and sometimes I think myself hardly justifiable in intruding myself upon a family where I am certainly not liked by so many of the members; yet, my dear Sir, while I am solicitous not to become an unwelcome burthen on Mr. Macartney's generosity, I am equally anxious to avoid, from too great a jealousy and foreness of temper, misconstruing his manner, and mistaking that for coolness towards myself, which may arise from circumstances totally unconnected with me or my concerns. You, my best friend, who from my early youth have studied my disposition, will judge into which of these errors I am most likely to fall, and will have the goodness to advise me. It is necessary soon to decide; I am entered at
College,

College, but some weeks are yet to elapse before I go to take up my abode there. Do not be guided in your counsel by what you may think my inclination, but entirely by what is right and just. It is true, I love learning, and have often anticipated with delight the time I was to pass in that seat of the Muses; but I am full-grown, strong, healthy, able, and willing to work, and should be much happier earning my daily bread by the sweat of my brow, than sighing under the oppressive weight of an unwilling benefaction. Oh! Mr. Searle, if all the world could confer favours with that air of kindness that graces your generosity, that leaves the obliged person a pure and pleasing gratitude, without the least drawback on the delightful consciousness of having received a benefit from a true friend—every lot in life must be happy. Those who had the power of conferring, and those who received favours, would be equally to be envied; but perhaps I am too fastidious. Tell me the truth,

truth, my best friend, and be, as you ever have been, the guide and director of

“ Your ever grateful

“ MELBOURNE.”

The answer to this letter arrived in a few days, and was as follows in the next chapter.

CHAP. XVIII.

IN WHICH OUR HERO SHEWS GREAT GENERALSHIP.

“ TO MR. MELBOURNE.

“ THAT you are less happy than I am persuaded you deserve to be, my dear Melbourne, gives me the sincerest regret; and were I not certain, that in all situations in life good is balanced by evil, so as to render every lot nearly equal, I would not hesitate to say, return to Linwood, and forget your disappointment; for whether or not your doubts are well founded, they still exist, and will undoubtedly occasion you much disquiet; nor can I, at so great a distance, by any possible means form a judgment so likely
to

to be right, as you, who are on the spot, if you are capable of judging impartially; and that you are capable of so judging I am willing to hope, and not to imagine that you are so far prejudiced against Mr. Macartney as to see all he says and does in the worst light. Methinks I see your honest countenance betray some displeasure at this hint; but mistake me not, Melbourne. I do not apprehend that you are prejudiced against Mr. Macartney, in the common meaning of the word; I know too well the affectionate warmth of your nature, not to be certain that favours received would be the strongest possible tie upon you, were they bestowed with a good grace; but judging from the natural susceptibility and irritability of your temper, I am fearful lest, having once experienced an undeserved coolness from your benefactor, your jaundiced eye should throw the same tinge over the whole of his conduct. You acknowledge that there are times when his former affection shews itself, and gladdens your soul; dwell on these moments, my dear Melbourne, and endeavour

endeavour to put the most favourable construction on the rest of his manner. I allow that were you certain he wished to be rid of you, you would be unjustifiable in staying after you perceived it; but indeed it is equally unjustifiable to misinterpret his looks, and to apprehend a coolness which really may not exist. Of its reality you only can judge, and thus you see your boasted counsellor cannot extricate you from your indecision—can only advise you to be guided by your own judgment, and warn you not to let that judgment be warped. I should undoubtedly be grieved were you unnecessarily to lose the advantages now within your reach; and I cannot help fearing that you are too much disposed to create that necessity. Nor is it unnatural, that with quick feelings, and a good deal of pride, you should be too conscious of your dependant situation, and too sore to every thing that reminded you of it;—but remember how much you already owe to Mr. Macartney; and that gratitude and candour, or (excuse me if I use the word) charity, are

are duties more incumbent on you to observe, than the strict regard you are inclined to pay to your jealous honour. Your young companions must be strange beings if kindness and good-humour, such as I trust you have exercised towards them, cannot win on their affection. I fear, indeed, that their malice does you some disservice with their father; and I wish your friend Julia had continued to reside in the family, as I think she would have endeavoured to counteract their mischievous insinuations; but conscious as you are of not deserving any diminution of Mr. Macartney's kindness, I am very much inclined to say positively, persevere, my dear Melbourne, and be assured he will at last be fully convinced of your deserts. My sister joins in every good wish, and in the warmest affection with

“Your true and unalterable friend,

“WILFORD SEARLE.”

Linwood Parsonage.

Of the circumstances which put an end to
Melbourne's

Melbourne's irresolution, we shall leave him to give his own account to Mr. Searle in the following letter:—

“ TO MR. SEARLE.

“ Before I received your kind and esteemed letter, my dear Sir, every doubt was at an end, and my future conduct decided on. A circumstance occurred, which entirely stopped my irresolution, and of which I will endeavour to give you an account. The two Macartneys and myself had gone out for a day's shooting, and had wandered at some distance from Rosehill, when the decline of day reminded us of the necessity of returning. Our nearest way home lay through the grounds of a gentleman who is not on the best terms with his neighbours in general, though he behaves civilly enough to Mr. Macartney. He is, however, remarkably tenacious of his game; and Mr. Macartney, unwilling to disoblige him, and having long ceased to be a keen sportsman himself, had made it a rule with his sons to avoid shooting on that estate. Nor had

had we, I believe, the least intention of committing any trespass; but unfortunately as we were hastening home, Edmund's dog made a dead point, and presently a pheasant rose, which he fired at, and killed; and a second rising at the noise of the gun, he snatched my gun from me, and fired at that also, which he wounded, but did not entirely kill;—the first was presently found, but the second had fluttered to some distance, and Edmund and George were eagerly searching for it, while I called in the dogs, and endeavoured to persuade them to return. It grew darker every moment, and Edmund, impatient at not finding the bird, whistled away the dogs, and set them to hunt it out among the furze, encouraging them, and talking to George with a great deal of vociferation. Unluckily our search led us towards the house, and Mr. Beverly sent his servants to us. They not knowing us in the dark, accosted us rather rudely; and Edmund returning them a haughty answer, the game-keeper collared him, and dragged him towards the house.

George, finding himself unnoticed, ran homeward, and I remained where I was, with the dogs and the three guns. Another man came up to me, and asked me what business I had there; I told him who we were, and how we had been led on; and he seemed inclined to let us go; but by this time Edmund was engaged in a desperate quarrel with the game-keeper, fighting and abusing each other with an amazing noise. The rest of the servants formed a ring, and agreed to let them fight it out; but the game-keeper called to them to help him to carry the rascal to his master.

“Rascal!” repeated Edmund, choaked with passion, “do you know who you call rascal? Do you know, fellow, that I am Mr. Macartney’s eldest son?”

“No less a rascal for that,” replied the game-keeper; “Mr. Macartney’s eldest son may be a scoundrel as well as a poorer man’s; and I am sure you are no gentleman, or you would not have behaved as you have done, nor have abused me with the low unmannerly
language

language you have used. I do not believe you are Mr. Macartney's son."

"That's right, I say, my boy," cried one of the footmen; "let's drag him to the light, and see who and what he is."

"It was in vain that Edmund struggled, and that I remonstrated; they dragged us to the house, and locking us into a small room, went to Mr. Beverley, and informed him of the circumstance. Mr. Beverley was sitting at his bottle with some fellow-sportsmen, and angry to be disturbed in his mirth, and still more angry at the invasion of his rights, had scarcely heard the story, before he assumed the Justice of Peace, and ordered us to be confined. The men were leading us to a round-house at some distance, when Edmund, not liking the thoughts of spending the night there, gave them some money, and got off, unperceived by me, who continued in the custody of these fellows, till one of them asked me if I did not like to follow my companion's example, adding that for half-a-crown he would set me at liberty. As I was con-

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scious

scious of having committed no offence, I did not scruple to purchase my liberty at this rate, and made the best of my way to Rose-Hill. I found George at home, but Edmund not yet arrived; Mr. Macartney received me with great unkindness, and sternly asked me where his son was. I related to him the circumstances of his escaping unseen by me, and added that I expected to have found him at home. Mr. Macartney treated me with unusual severity, and seemed to consider me as having led his sons to commit this trespass, which was to put him on ill terms with Mr. Beverley. But the hours elapsing without Edmund's arriving, I confess I grew uneasy, and the more so as I suspected the cause of his absence. I took my hat, and went in pursuit of him. The night was wet and windy, and particularly dark; I almost feared some accident had befallen him, but determined to satisfy the suspicion I entertained in the first instance; and if I did not find him where I expected, I meant to return home, and bring servants and lights to search for

for him in all directions. I went immediately to the town, (having had, however, the precaution to take one servant with me), and proceeded to the house where I had some idea he might be. The people denied him to my enquiries, but I insisted on going up stairs, and after some slight opposition, I made my way to the great room, where I found a number of men engaged at a gaming-table. The countenances of these people made me shudder; but I in vain sought for Edmund Maccartney among them, and began to give over all idea of finding him there, when a door on the opposite side opened, and a party of young men, flushed with wine, came in swearing and rioting: in the midst of these was the youth I sought, and the first emotion I felt was joy that he had met with no fatal accident. And now I proceeded to follow the plan I had laid down; and stealing unperceived out of the room, I went back to the servant, and gave him a note for Mr. Maccartney, requesting him, without delay, to follow the man, but assuring him that no acci-

dent was the cause of this summons. I then remained below, keeping my eye fixed on the door, that Edmund might not leave the place without my knowledge. Perhaps, my dear Sir, you will think I conducted myself with very cautious cunning in this business, and would rather have advised me to expostulate with Edmund, and persuade him to return home, than to have laid such an ambuscade for him. But believe me, I was actuated by no desire of exalting myself in Mr. Macartney's opinion, any more than of debasing his son; for I had found, by experience, that my expostulations would have availed nothing, and I knew too well how quarrelsome he always was when in liquor, to risk making any attempt then. I had previously told him that the very next time I knew of his engaging in such an occupation, I would acquaint his father; and therefore I avoided his sight at this moment, as otherwise he would have prevented my sending to Rose-Hill, and perhaps, as he had done before, would have obtained a promise of my
silence,

silence, by making most liberal vows of amendment : I knew I should be unable to resist his solicitations, and I knew also that the habit was gaining most dangerously upon him, and required some effectual check. Had I uniformly told you, my dearest Sir, the various endeavours I have made, wholly without success, to detach Edmund from this destructive passion, you would not blame so severely as I lament, the apparently ungenerous fortitude I was obliged to exert on this occasion.

“ I had not waited very long before Mr. Macartney arrived ; and taking him a little aside, I briefly told him my conduct, and my motives, and besought him to accompany me up stairs. He did so ; and we entered at the moment that Edmund, having already lost sums far beyond his ability to pay, was, with dreadful execrations, preparing to throw once more, the event of which was to double or to annihilate his debt. Mr. Macartney advanced immediately opposite to his son, and, with a loud voice, exclaimed, “ Put down the
3. box,

box, Edmund." Edmund started, turned pale, gnashed his teeth, and letting fall the cursed instrument of the horror he felt, was hastening to the door, but was overtaken by his father, who led him to a private room, while I resumed my station below stairs, not judging it proper to witness the conversation. —It lasted not long. They came down together, and Mr. Macartney spoke to me in a voice of the tenderest friendship, but Edmund turned sullenly from me, and would not speak to me at all. These various events had taken so much time, that it was two in the morning before we reached Rose-Hill; and after we had parted for the night, I received a message from Mr. Macartney that he wished to speak to me either then or early in the morning. I was not quite undressed, and went immediately to his chamber. He was sitting in his *robe de chambre* at his desk, writing; and on my entrance pointed to a chair near him, and taking my hand, seemed desirous of beginning, but was unable to speak. At length he said—a great deal more than is
necessary

necessary to repeat; but of all the praises and acknowledgments he made me, nothing affected me more than his saying, 'I feel my obligation to you so much the more sensibly for having so lately wronged you in my opinion;—this very evening I was unjust towards you, in considering you as the person who had led my sons on to commit such a trespass on a neighbour's estate; and to-night you have rendered me a service which I never shall forget, and for which my gratitude will end but with my life.'—We had a long and affectionate conversation, and a most affecting one. I think till now I never knew the worth of Mr. Macartney's character, nor the genuine sensibility and candour of his heart. I am sure great pains have been taken to prejudice him against me, but it is now for at an end; and his conduct towards me shews so unequivocal an affection, and such an indisputable desire of serving me, that I shall feel no more reluctance to accepting his benevolence, than if he were my father.

“Edmund

“ Edmund, who was to have returned to College, is now to be sent abroad under the care of an esteemed friend of Mr. Macartney’s, that he may at least be cut off for a time from his old gambling connections, and may not lead George into the same errors; and this day three weeks we go to Cambridge, where I shall rejoin my dear Lord George Montague, whose letters continue to express the warmest and most unabating friendship. Young Shirley Montague, the son of your friend, writes to me too from Eton; his father is still abroad, and there is very little expectation of his return while we continue at peace with the Court where he resides as ambassador. I hope some time or other I shall see and know this esteemed friend of my dear Mr. Searle’s. I feel the strongest desire to be acquainted with him, both from your affection for him, and the extreme respect which Lord George entertains for him. He says he is sorry to have observed sometimes, that although he is at the summit of worldly prosperity, there is some occasional uneasiness that throws a shade over

over his happiness. Yet he idolizes his wife, and is most fortunate in his children, besides the distinguished rank he has obtained in the state, and the singular esteem with which he is every where respected; but, now and then, in the midst even of their domestic felicity, some sad remembrance will occur to his mind — his countenance will change, and his amiable lady will catch the mournful contagion. Yet Lord George says he has not the smallest idea of any circumstance that can occasion it; nor does his uncle ever (to his knowledge) say a syllable which can discover any cause. I have arrived at the utmost limits of my paper, and must hastily conclude with grateful love to Miss Searle."

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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per, and especially coincide with general
love to Miss Fanny.



